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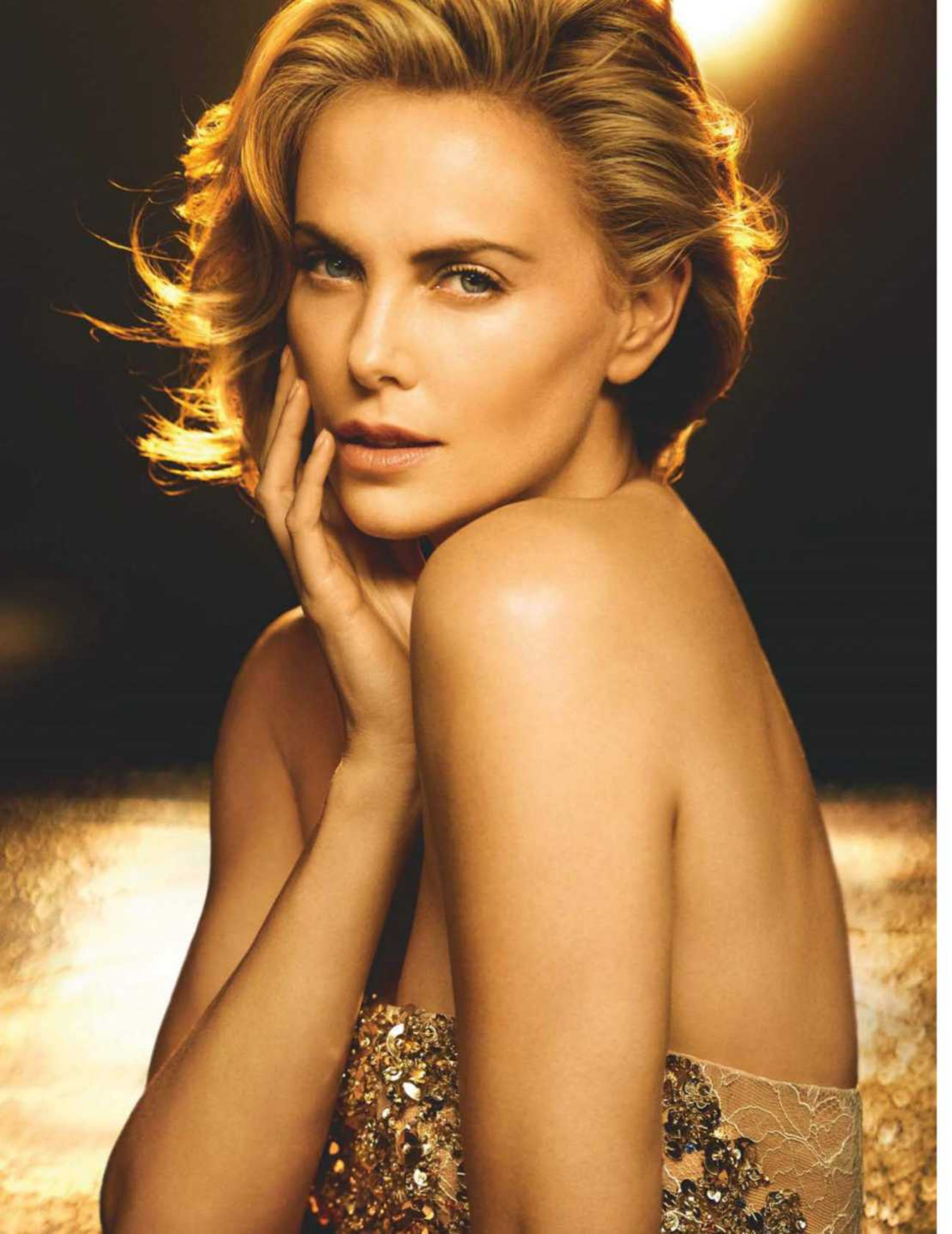
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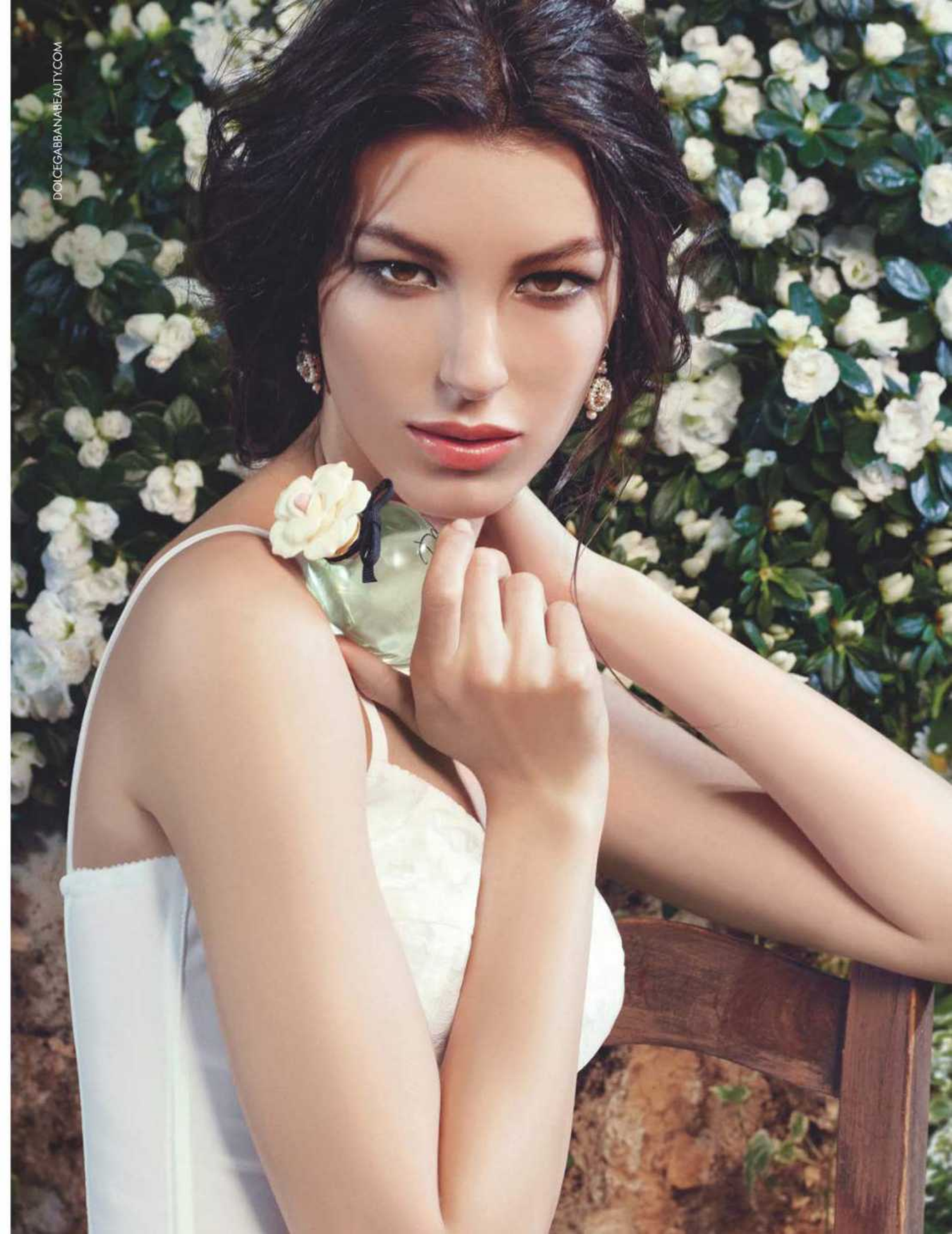


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'LOVERS & DEMONS': LEE MILLER



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'TALITA VON FABULOUS'

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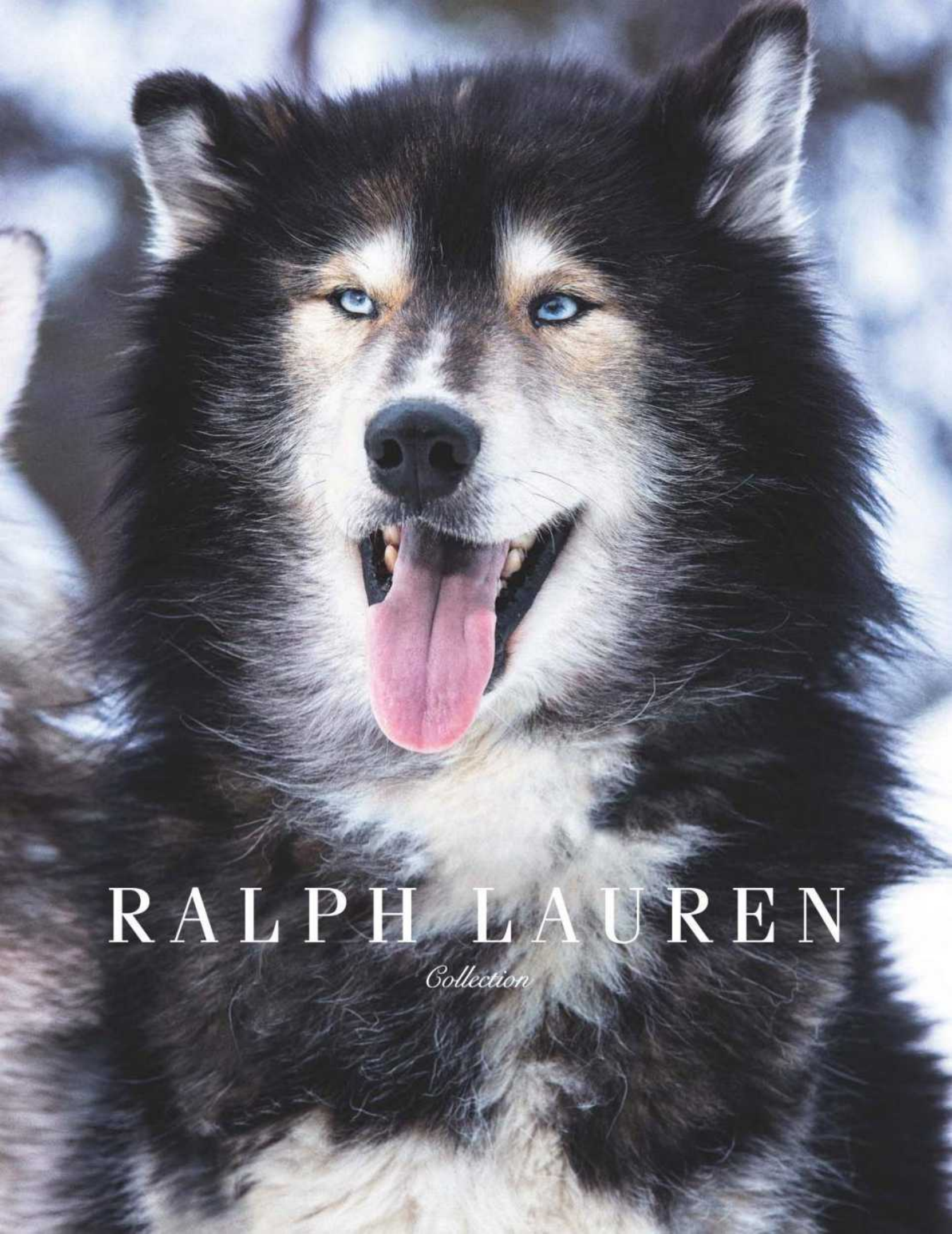


COVER: TALITA VON FURSTENBERG
PHOTOGRAPHED BY JASON KIM
STYLED BY DEEP KAILEY

Talita von Furstenberg wears silk jumpsuit, £588, by DVF. *On left wrist*, gold bracelets, £4,600 each, by Cartier. *On right wrist*, gold bangle, £355, by Ileana Makri. Gold-plated-silver bangle, £83, by Alice Eden. Gold-plated silver bangle, £71 (for two), by DVF. For stockists, see Address Book. Hair by Michael Silva at the Wall Group, using Bumble & Bumble: Surf Infusion and Texture Creme. Make-up by Jeffrey Baum at Atelier Management, using Chanel A/W 2015 and Chanel Body Excellence: Rouge Allure Luminous Satin Lip Colour in 162 Pensive, Joues Contraste Powder Blush in 260 Alezane, Le Volume de Chanel Volume and Curl Mascara in 80 Ecorces, Stylo Yeux Waterproof Long-Lasting Eyeliner in 921 Pomme de Pin, Body Excellence Firming and Rejuvenating Body Cream. Nails by Elisa Wishan

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PHOTOGRAPHS: CHANTELLE DOSSER, RUBYROSE/INSTAGRAM, ISTOCK

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ON TATLER.COM THIS MONTH

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◆ The great beaver debate and other creatures in our really wild estates special



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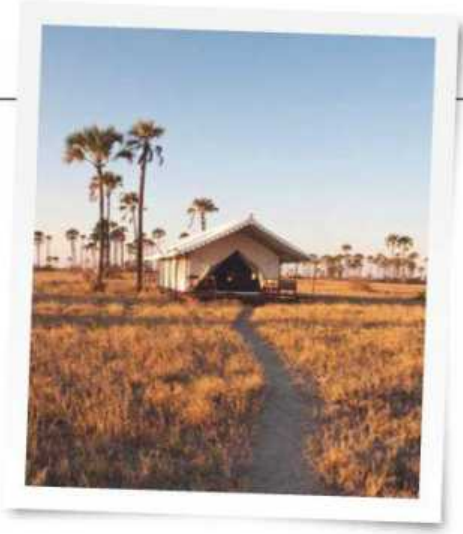
PHOTOGRAPHS: BEN QUINTON, TONY RAMIREZ/IMAGES OF POLO, SHUTTERSTOCK, MARK COCKSEDGE

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TOP MARKS: TATLER SCHOOLS LIVE! EVENT

Are you trying to navigate the education minefield? Please don't worry – help is at hand: Tatler Schools Live!, in association with Microsoft, is bringing together experts (we're talking heavy hitters such as former Wellington super-head Dr Sir Anthony Seldon and Andrew Halls, head of King's College School, Wimbledon) to tutor you through the process. ITV News presenter Mary Nightingale will whisk you through proceedings and *Tatler*'s team of school whizzes will be on hand to answer specific questions. So RELAX, book now and we'll see you at the Jumeirah Carlton Tower on 2 October. ***tatler.com/schoolslive***



TRAVEL SMART

Who knows where you should go on holiday? The Tatler Holiday Wizard does. Just answer a few key questions and, before you can say 'Where did that rabbit go?', it will magic you up the perfect trip. ***wizard.tatler.com***

FULLY BOOKED



Roll up for the Tatler Book Club, in association with The Books That Built Me. Under the spotlight this month is actor turned novelist Jason Hewitt, who will discuss his second novel, *Devastation Road*, and the books that inspired him. Join Jason on 6 October at the Club at Café Royal. Tickets are £26.99, including a six-month *Tatler* subscription, a glass of Bollinger and some Prestat chocolate. ***thebooksthatbuiltjason.eventbrite.co.uk***

THIS MONTH IN TATLER WORLD

Online. Out and about. Everywhere, really



BALL OR NOTHING



Tatler is hosting another Bystander Ball! Yes, all you 13-to-16-year-olds, it's time to grab your parents' cash card (please do tell them) and bag your tickets. When? Monday 21 December. Where? Boujis. Yes, BOUJIS. It's £60 a ticket if buying four, otherwise £65*. Book now at tatler.com/bystanderball.
**£55 for Privilege Club members.*

Twinkle toes

Need more shoes? Of course you do. Then Instagram your best party feet at #KGpartyfeet to enter a competition for a pair of Kurt Geiger Collection shoes of your choice. Win every week throughout September. And if that's not enough, there's a grand prize draw at the end of the month for an A/W shoe wardrobe (five pairs). ***Go to tatler.com for more details.***



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HERMIONE EYRE

Hermione muses on mewses with Marissa Hermer (page 173)

What’s your favourite joke?
What’s brown and sticky? A stick. (Apols.)
What’s your worst habit?
Dunking.
What’s the phrase or word you overuse the most?
This month it’s ‘teleological’ and ‘gauche’.
If you could get away with one crime, what would it be?
A really punchy literary hoax.

CONTRIBUTORS

What’s on their minds this month?



ALEXANDER WHITLEY

Alexander choreographs our dancy fashion (page 164)

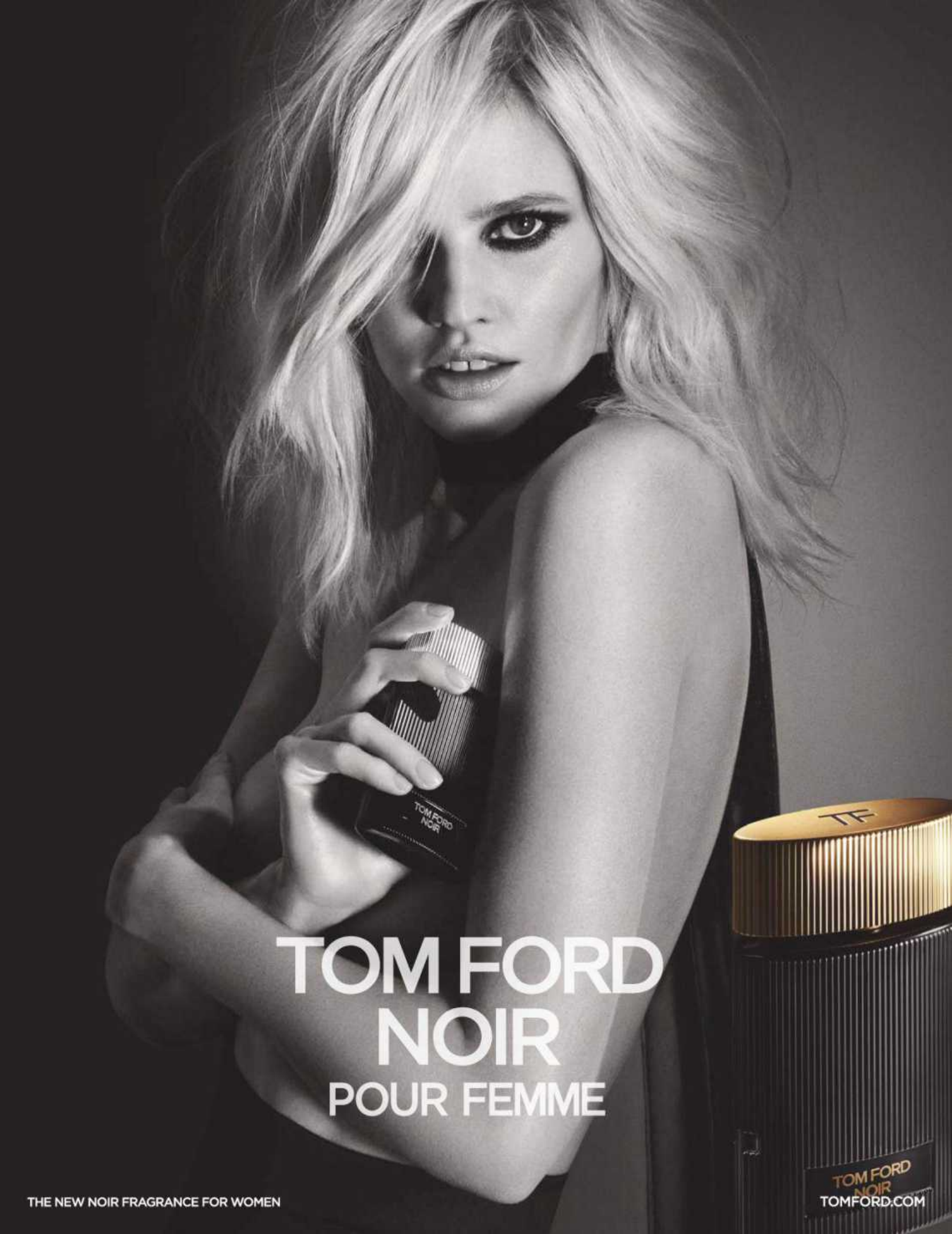
What’s your favourite joke?
Why are Mexicans always cold? Because they have chicken fajitas.
What never fails to make you laugh? A good pun.
Which super-power would you most like to have?
To be able to fly – imagine the choreographic possibilities!



PATRICK FRASER

Patrick photographs the whizz-banging Phoebe Dahl (page 154)

What’s your favourite joke?
What’s the difference between ignorance and apathy? I don’t know and I don’t care.
What would be your death-row meal? Sherry trifle.
What’s the best chat-up line you’ve ever heard? Licking one’s finger and touching someone, then saying, ‘Let me help you get out of those wet clothes...’ ▷


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JASON KIM

Jason photographs this month's cover girl, Talita von Furstenberg (page 126)

What's your favourite joke?
Donald Trump running for president.
What's your signature dance move?
The hair whip.
What would be your death-row meal?
Sushi, sushi and more sushi.
What's your go-to fancy-dress costume?
Charlie Chaplin.

CONTRIBUTORS

What's on their minds this month?



GILES WOOD

Giles on the need for rewilding (page 138)

What's your signature dance move? Windmilling.
What's your worst habit?
Watching TV till two in the morning.
What would be your death-row meal? Dressed Cromer crab with real mayonnaise.
What's the phrase or word you overuse the most? 'I'm dreading this.'



GEORDIE GREIG

Geordie visits the Caribbean's secret Eden, Anguilla (page 200)

What's your best memory?
Being born next to my twin sister... And then having twins myself 40 years later.
What's your signature dance move? My daughter Octavia tells me it is the typical Dad dance.
What would be your death-row meal? I'd have Sally Clarke's dish of the day sent over. □

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1 Make a sex tape. With someone else.

2 Leave the country.



3 Become obsessed with *World of Warcraft*.



4 Get a cat. Or a house pig. Or a cuddle snake. Get a few.
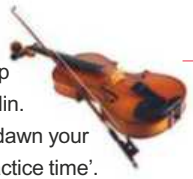


5 Start being rude to waiters. Really shout at them.

6 Develop road rage, technology rage, wine rage, fruit rage, boot rage... you get the idea.

7 Give up sex. Say you want a higher level of connection.

8 Marry someone else.



9 Take up the violin. Make dawn your 'precious practice time'.

10 Send them selfies of yourself every half hour or so.



11 Move in with your parents.



12 Or into a charming little basement in Battersea.

13 Insist on rebirthing them every night.

14 Embrace a raw-garlic diet.



15 Start splitting every bill, cab fare, Ocado order, etc, down to the penny. Or even the halfpenny. Invoice them accordingly.



16 Floss all day. Everywhere. All the time. And examine the findings. Then share them.

17 Sign off every text with 'Love and Light'.



18 Decide that washing is bourgeois.

19 Take your imaginary friend to bed with you every night. Sing her to sleep with songs you've made up.

20 Call them by their mother/father's name during sex. Every time. As though you can't help it, no matter how hard you try. ☐



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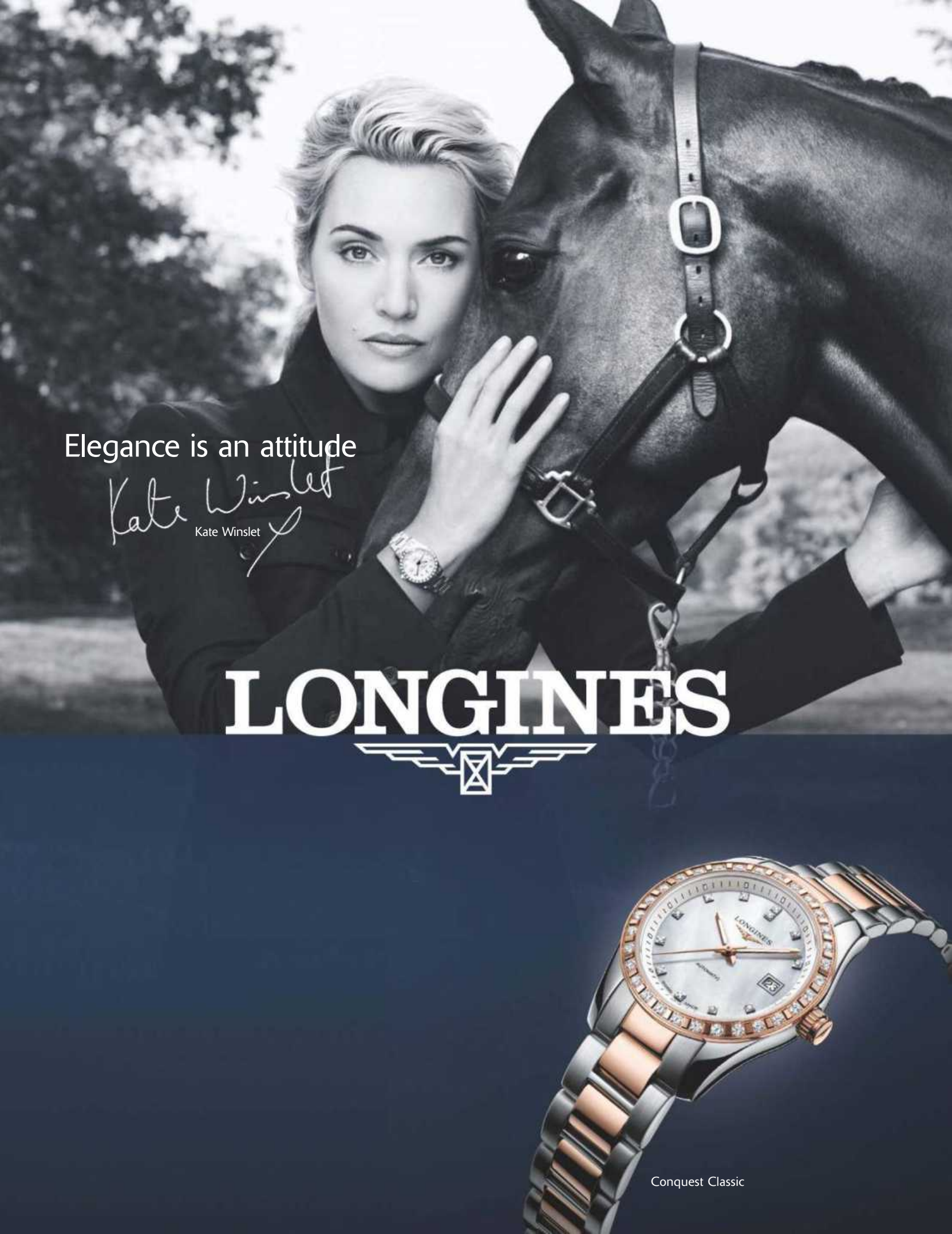
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Fashion

Photographed by ANDREW WOFFINDEN

HERE'S LOOKING AT... BEN GORHAM

Look at this fine specimen of a man, with his tattooed forearms, his smouldering stare, his astonishingly bushy beard. Now hazard a guess at what he does for a living. Frontman of the world's coolest rock band? Nope. Edgy fashion designer? Not quite. Underwear model? Wishful thinking. Give up? He makes scent. Yes, scent. It all started when he met top Swedish perfumer Pierre Wulff in Ben's native Stockholm over 10 years ago. 'I had just finished art school, and it was my first real encounter with fragrance – I'd never even worn it,' says Ben, 38. 'I was intrigued by what [Pierre] claimed he could do with smell, so I challenged him to translate some ideas into scents.' Ben asked him to recreate the fragrance of his father, who he remembers smelling like 'the essence of a green bean'. Pierre nailed it and Ben was hooked. Since then he's created his own perfumes through his Scandi-chic fragrance house, Byredo, and has just launched two new scents: Rose of No Man's Land, created with his supermodel pal Freja Beha Erichsen to raise money for her favourite charity, Doctors Without Borders; and Night Veils, three fragrances inspired by flowers that only bloom at night. He also does bespoke scents, for people who can't bear to smell like anyone else, starting at £14,300. The weirdest scent he's ever been asked for? 'Body odours, burnt skin... It gets very animalistic.' ***LB***

BEN GORHAM'S CLOTHES, HIS OWN. GROOMING BY NICKY TAVILLA AT TERRI MANDUCA, USING NARS COSMETICS. STYLED BY SOPHIE GOODWIN


OLIVIA PALERMO IN NINA RICCI


LAURA LOVE IN RODARTE


DREE HEMINGWAY IN GUCCI


STELLA TENNANT IN DIOR


MIROSLAVA DUMA IN VITA KIN

PHOTOGRAPHS: REX FEATURES, GETTY IMAGES

DON'T YOU WISH YOU'D WORN THAT? POLO NECKS

A polo neck is everybody's friend. It hides a no-neck. It accentuates a swan neck and here's what else it does: it adds drama. But it's such a subtle drama that you could never be accused of focus-pulling. In fact, it's drama disguised as 'don't look at me…' Crafty. Similarly, it's sexy disguised as demure. It's a slippery sucker, isn't it?

It takes one hell of a man to pull off a polo neck without looking at least faintly absurd, but for women they are among the most democratic of pieces. And the other democratic element is that, this autumn, the polo is an easy updater. Wear a polo with anything. In fact, wear any polo with anything. Plain or printed, tight or loose, big fat roll neck or timid little turtleneck. Sparkles. Stripes. Any which way and you've got it right.

When fashion is this easy, we all look for the booby trap. And there it is – careful with the big bosoms lest they look like a shelf. A welcoming, cushiony, inviting shelf, but a shelf nonetheless. ***AR***


ANJA RUBIK IN REDEMPTION CHOPPERS


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WOOL-JACQUARD VEST, £210, BY **PAUL & JOE**



SATIN SHIRT WITH SCARF, £805, BY **GUCCI**



CASHMERE VEST, £1,041, BY **CHANEL**



SUEDE SHOES, £442, BY **CHANEL**



PLEXIGLAS & CRYSTAL BROOCH, £505, BY **PRADA**



TWEED SKIRT, £991, BY **CHANEL**



SILK SHIRT, £875, BY **BOTTEGA VENETA**



PIN-UP
'Can someone turn off the bloody wind machine!'



ETRO A/W 15/16



ACNE A/W 15/16



CADY SKIRT, £250, BY **CARVEN**



WOOL & ALPACA VEST, £390, BY **CARVEN**



NAPPA BAG, £17,320, BY **BOTTEGA VENETA**



LEATHER HEADBAND, POA, BY **FENDI**



SILK-CREPE BLOUSE, £209, BY **ORLA KIELY**



WOOL-CREPE SKIRT, £195, BY **ORLA KIELY**



MARC JACOBS A/W 15/16

MSGM A/W 15/16

Sweater vests

If men can look approachable yet hot, classic yet alert, adorable yet sharp in a sweater vest, then why can't women? The answer is: they can. But just as men can look barrel-shaped and oddly-put-together in a sweater vest, so can women. This autumn, the mood is textured, gradated and slightly eccentric. So pick as chirpy a sweater vest as you dare and then really consider what lies beneath. No monochrome. No sharp, ruthless power shirts. Gauzy blouses, pussybows, flowing silken sleeves and unexpected colour combos. Oh, and try your sweater vest with a skirt. A busy skirt. A skirt that surprises even you. Who knew? ***AR***

PHOTOGRAPH: JONTY DAVIES/AUGUST. STILL-LIFES: PSC



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CORDUROY TROUSERS, £125, BY **TOPSHOP UNIQUE**



SILK-MIX DRESS, £535, BY **LONGCHAMP**

SILK-CADY JUMPSUIT, £895, BY **ROKSANDA**



PIN-UP
I really can't hold this pose for much longer...

LEATHER SHOES, £535, BY **PAULA CADEMARTORI**



CORDUROY JACKET, £750, BY **CHLOE**



FENDI A/W 15/16



LOEWE A/W 15/16



POLO NECK, £70, BY **TOPSHOP UNIQUE**



SUNGLASSES £211, BY **CHLOE**



WOOL TOP, £1,000, BY **DIOR**



SUEDE BOOTS, £1,025, BY **AQUAZZURA**



SILK-TWILL SHIRT, £480; CASHMERE JUMPER, £570, BOTH BY **PRADA**



WOOL TROUSERS, £760, BY **DIOR**



TOMMY HILFIGER A/W 15/16



PHILOSOPHY A/W 15/16



SUEDE BAG, £1,695, BY **BURBERRY PRORSUM**

New Seventies

So, season on season, we are drilling down deeper into the Seventies. First it was flares. Then it was gilets. Then it was full-on-summer-hippie-floaty-my-boaty. And now it's so Seventies it doesn't even feel influenced. It feels lifted. Half-inched. Patterned polos, *jolie-laide* printed-wool mini-dresses, shearling 'n' denim, fringed suede bags and onwards through the mists of time. It's winter Seventies. Typing-pool Seventies. Glamorous by virtue of being retro. Sexy by virtue of you looking exactly like his mum. ***AR***

STILL-LIFES: PSC. PHOTOGRAPH: PATRICK DEMARCHELIER/CONDE NAST ARCHIVE



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Gloves

Suddenly gloves don't make us look like virgin serial killers. This may not last. So make hay... ***AR***



PHOTOGRAPH: CONDE NAST ARCHIVE/PATRICK DEMARCHELIER. STILL-LIFES: PSC

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LONDON



The Highland thigh boot by Stuart Weitzman

www.russellandbromley.co.uk

THE BAG THAT THINKS IT'S A PLATE

Photographed by WILL SANDERS



FOR STOCKISTS, SEE ADDRESS BOOK. HAIR & MAKE-UP BY HILA KARMAND, USING BUMBLE AND BUMBLE & STILA. MODEL, TESSA WESTERHOF AT WILHELMINA MODELS. BONE CHINA PLATES, FROM £22, BY JASPER CONRAN FOR WEDGWOOD. PROPS AND LOCATION BY THEME TRADERS (THEMETRADERS.COM; ENQUIRIES@THEMETRADERS.COM). STYLED BY AILSA MILLER

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If you are considering private education for your child, the *Tatler Schools Live!* event is an absolute must – a full day of lectures and discussions moderated by Mary Nightingale, ITN newsreader, presenter and mother of two. A distinguished panel of education specialists from top prep and public schools will discuss the fiercely debated subject of single-sex versus co-ed, the eternal question of whether to board or not, and the nitty-gritty of applying to prep and senior schools, particularly in London. We'll provide all the information and advice you need to choose the right school for your child.

Our speakers:



Mrs Vivienne Durham
Headmistress
Francis Holland School, Regent's Park



Mrs Carol Evelegh
Principal
The Kindergartens



Mrs Emma Goldsmith
Headmistress
Winchester House School



Mr Andrew Halls
Headmaster
King's College School, Wimbledon



Dr Niall Hamilton
Senior admissions tutor
Marlborough College



Mrs Rosemary Herbert
Registrar
Sussex House School



Mrs Sally Hobbs
Headmistress
Orchard House
(1993-2015)



Mr James Hooke
Headmaster
Harrodian



Mr Tony Little
Headmaster
Eton
(2002-2015)



Mrs Helen Lowe
Headmistress
Bute House



Mr Eddy Newton
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Mrs Samantha Price
Headmistress
Benenden



Sir Anthony Seldon
Master
Wellington College
(2006-2015)



Dr Joseph Spence
Master
Dulwich College



Mr Ben Thomas
Headmaster
Thomas's, Battersea



Dr Anthony Wallersteiner
Headmaster
Stowe School

TO BOOK, VISIT **TATLERSCHOOLSGUIDELIVE.EVENTBRITE.CO.UK**

PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY IMAGES



ROSE-GOLD WATCH WITH LEATHER STRAP, £59,780, BY **PATEK PHILIPPE**. WHITE-GOLD & BLUE-SAPPHIRE RING, *ON RIGHT HAND*, £1,975, BY **GEORG JENSEN**. COLOURED-DIAMOND RING, POA, BY **DAVID MORRIS**. WOOL-BLEND DRESS, £2,455, BY **ROCHAS**

IT'S FUN O'CLOCK!

Here's a treat. Anna Brewster, random domestic items and some lovely watches

Photographed by
MARCELO KRASILCIC

Styled by
DEEP KAILEY

Edited by
CHARLIE BYRNE



Anna Brewster

Anna Brewster's a pro when it comes to getting into a corset. The 29-year-old actress got plenty of practice on the set of *The Tudors*, and now she's lacing herself back up for her starring role in the upcoming Canal+ show *Versailles*, in which she plays Louis XIV's favourite mistress, Madame de Montespan. But the London College of Fashion graduate still has the odd period-costume disaster – like the time her dress caught fire on the *Versailles* set. 'We would eat lunch outside, so they'd put heaters under the table to keep us warm,' says Anna. 'I got up from the table one time and someone said, "Anna, you're on fire!" Everyone ran over and started flapping at my dress.' Her next role, in the new *Star Wars*, is so super-secret she can't even discuss what she'll be wearing: 'It's Disney, so you don't want to cross any lines...' Off duty, she can be found at home in south London, bingeing on a *Downton Abbey* boxset: 'I just love Maggie Smith. She makes me so happy.' ***Luciana Bellini***

STEEL WATCH, £4,800, BY **ROLEX**. GOLD & YELLOW-QUARTZ RING, £1,160, BY **MARCO BICEGO**. ON ARM, *FROM TOP*, ROSE-GOLD BRACELETS, £3,890 & £4,660; ROSE-GOLD & DIAMOND BRACELET, £4,440, ALL BY **HERMES**. SILK-CREPE SHIRT, £650, BY **GUCCI**



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PARIS



WHITE-GOLD & DIAMOND WATCH, £27,100, BY **CARTIER**. DIAMOND & YELLOW-SAPPHIRE EARRINGS, £9,900, BY **ASPREY**. GOLD & CITRINE RING, £770, BY **TIFFANY & CO**. CASHMERE SWEATER, POA, BY **DOLCE & GABBANA**



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FOR STOCKISTS, SEE ADDRESS BOOK. HAIR BY STEPHEN LOW AT ELSL MANAGEMENT FOR NEVILLE. MAKE-UP BY ANDREW GALLIMORE AT CLM HAIR & MAKE-UP FOR NARS COSMETICS. NAILS BY SABRINA GAYLE AT LMC WORLDWIDE, USING CHANEL A/W 2015 AND BODY EXCELLENCE HAND CREAM. PRODUCTION, ELLE KORHALILLER. FASHION ASSISTANT, JESSICA RADCLIFFE-BROWN



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STILL-LIFES: PSC

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WATCHES



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STILL-LIFES: PSC. FOR STOCKISTS, SEE ADDRESS BOOK. EDITED BY CHARLIE BYRNE

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Special Edition - ***toccata***

Mariella Tandy rounds up the month's most splendid must-haves

THE IT LIST

HOT COMBO

Hubba-hubba alert! Lara Stone is the new face of **Kurt Geiger** for A/W15. Celebrate the union of everyone's favourite Dutch girl and everyone's favourite shoes with their new striped Saffiano London tote. *kurtgeiger.com*



£220, BY **KURT GEIGER**





We all love a hoop. But how about clipping something sparkly and colourful onto it? Like this Annoushka pink-sapphire amulet, £3,600. Now THAT would be good. annoushka.com

SUPER SMOOTH

Shut your eyes. Picture **La Prairie**'s famous Skin Caviar Luxe Cream Sheer. Imagine it a bit lighter, so it works better on younger skin. Now open. *harrods.com*

£292, BY **LA PRAIRIE**





£575, BY **AMANDA WAKELEY**

GREY GLORY

Who needs sleeves anyway? The really smart way to coast through winter this season is with a gilet – such as this gorgeous grey-wool Apache delight by **Amanda Wakeley**. Insanely flattering and just perfect for layering. *amandawakeley.com*



£56, BY **KIT AND ACE**

It is possible to spend an entire lifetime looking for the ultimate tee – but your search may now be over. **Kit and Ace**, the clever crowd behind Lululemon, have gone and invented 'technical cashmere' T-shirts. Obesession is guaranteed. *kitandace.com*

QUEEN OF THE NIGHT

Your skin has a lot to do between sundown and dawn. Give it a leg-up with **Olay**'s Regenerist 3 Point Age-Defying Night Cream, which energises and anti-ages while you're out for the count. *boots.com*

£30, BY **OLAY**



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POA, BY **DIOR**

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£1,750, BY **MAPPIN & WEBB**

CENTRE POINT

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Get strapped in

If you are sensible, you will already be the owner of last season's suede trench. We are now in the era of corduroy – like this navy-blue offering from **Jaeger**. You need it. Because there's no such thing as too many trenches. From the new A/W 2015 collection. *jaeger.co.uk*



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3 THIS STROKEABLE SHEARLING TOP-HANDLE TIFFIN BAG BY **RALPH LAUREN** CAN HOLD A SURPRISING AMOUNT OF YOUR STUFF. THINK TARDIS – BUT CUTER. *RALPHLAUREN.COM*



£2,620, BY **GUCCI**

The Greek god Dionysus was a big fan of wine and partying. So imagine the joy he might have expressed on discovering that **Gucci** had designed a mind-bending red snakeskin bag and named it after him. He would have sent out invitations and thrown it an enormous bash. *gucci.com*



Time to get excited, Vuitton worshippers. ***Louis Vuitton****'s Series Three Exhibition reveals the secrets of its A/W 2015 collection. From 20 September to 16 October at 180 The Strand, WC2. Admission is free. louisvuitton.com* ▷



£8,500, BY **GEORG JENSEN**

SIMPLY RED

Oooh, rubies. And responsibly sourced to boot. Admire them in all their conscientious prettiness as they sit embedded in this Dune bracelet by **Georg Jensen**. Visit their new store on Mount Street, where even more treasures await. *georgjensen.com*



PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID BAILEY



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POA, BY
VIZELLE

Beat the big chill

Winter coats can reach almost alarming levels of cosiness and glamour, particularly when they are by Vizelle and are made of three colours, like this one. It's time to get snug all over again. *vizellecouture.com*

BARE NECESSITIES

Take a look at your current wallet. Now take a look at this picture. OK, be honest – this picture is nicer, isn't it? That's because it's **Paul Smith** – and his new leather-goods range comes in different sizes and dreamy colours. *paulsmith.co.uk*



£350, BY
PAUL SMITH



If the Grotta Azzurra were a **Jacob & Co** diamond and Paraiba-tourmaline ring, it would look like this. If Paul Newman's eyes were a ring, they would have looked like this. If the bluest blue movie ever produced were a ring – um, OK, maybe not. *jacobandco.com*

POA, BY
JACOB & CO



THAT'S SO ME!

Burberry is launching a scarf bar. Choose any scarf you like in any colour you like and then get it personalised if you like. Like bespoke cocktails – but for your neck. We like. burberry.com

TRIPLE TREAT

A three-way solution for sad skin

1 SUPREMYA NIGHT BALM BY **SISLEY** IS THE FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE OF DRY SKIN. IT REPAIRS OVERNIGHT AND RALLIES YOUR SKIN FOR WHATEVER THE NEXT DAY MIGHT THROW AT IT. *HARRODS.COM*



£475, BY
SISLEY



£35, BY
ESPA



£45, BY
ELIZABETH ARDEN

2 USE THIS SUPERSTART SKIN-RENEWAL BOOSTER BY **ELIZABETH ARDEN** BEFORE YOUR USUAL SERUM. YOUR SKIN WILL BE EVEN MORE PROTECTED AND WILL REAP THE BENEFITS. *BOOTS.COM*

3 HA-HA, UVA AND UVB RAYS! YOU DIDN'T SEE THE INVISIBLE SKIN SHIELD THAT **ESPA**'S OPTIMAL SKIN PRO DEFENCE CREATES AND NOW YOU'RE NOT CAUSING ANY DAMAGE! *espa.com*

FRENCH REVOLUTION

It's time to get a bit Marie Antoinette about your bathroom. A **Lilou et Loïc** decanter holding a heavenly elixir of scented bubbles should do the trick. Do not be afraid to make ill-advised remarks about cake whilst wallowing in the tub. *lilouetloic.com*

£78, BY
LILOU ET LOIC



OUT OF SIGHT

This Secret Cluster bracelet knows something you don't. It's got an emerald hidden beneath all those diamonds. Like going out with no knickers on – but actually not, because this is way better. *harrywinston.com*



POA, BY
HARRY WINSTON

A beauty-treatment emergency may occur at any time or in any place. At home, on a yacht or on a jet. Yes, anywhere. Thank the God of Wax that ***Perfect 10*** *has launched its Black Label service, which means their best therapists will discreetly turn up within 24 hours (perfect10mobilebeautybooking.co.uk).* □

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About Town

Photographed by SQUIZ HAMILTON

THE SINGER

Remember this Betty Boop-shaped face. It's destined for great things. 'The ultimate goal is Taylor Swift status,' says Alfie Maxwell. 'I know it sounds crazy.'

Not necessarily. The determined 17-year-old chanteuse has just finished recording her debut album with her producer, Julian Chown, in the studio at his King's Road house. When released, it will appear under her real name, Alfreda, after her great-great-grandfather, publishing magnate Alfred Harmsworth, 1st Viscount Northcliffe.

Alfie makes catchy, synthy pop about boyfriends and parties, and she's already been compared to Lorde and Björk. 'There's definitely one person in my life who's influenced a lot of songs,' she says. So far, so Taylor.

She's always been creative and surrounded by inspiring sorts. Her father is the poet Glyn Maxwell – Alfie credits him for her wild, Welsh colouring and for encouraging her to write screenplays 'aged seven or eight'. Her mother, Geraldine, modelled for Guy Bourdin and now writes poetry and recites it at clubs, including the Troubadour. And Isabella Blow was Alfie's godmother.

Alfie lives at her mum's house in Notting Hill and is in her final year at Hampstead Fine Arts. After music and winged eyeliner, acting is another great love, and Alfie came close to big roles in *Nanny McPhee* and *Alice in Wonderland*. 'Tim Burton saw my headshot and said, "She looks great" – but then he changed the age of Alice.'

Never mind acting, though. At the moment, Alfie is busy thinking about gigs and album titles. 'I worry a bit. The thing that makes me the most happy is what I'm doing, but it also makes me the most sad, because – what if it doesn't work?' She sighs. 'You've just got to keep going.' Swifty would be proud. ***SM-C***

ALFIE MAXWELL WEARS SATIN BOMBER, £395, BY TOMMY HILFIGER. SEQUIN T-SHIRT, £765, BY ALEXANDER LEWIS. COATED DENIM JEANS, £200, BY CURRENT/ELLIOTT. JEWELLERY, ALFIE'S OWN. FOR STOCKISTS, SEE ADDRESS BOOK. HAIR & MAKE-UP BY HILA KARMAND, USING LANCÔME. LOCATION BY THE ELECTRIC CAROUSEL (THEELECTRICCAROUSEL.COM). STYLED BY AILSA MILLER



PHOTOGRAPH: JAMES WHITE



Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, & the Prince of Wales with the duchess's dogs Beth, *left*, & Bluebell at the Dumfries House Fun Dog Show

Who's king?

Not you, Fido. The canine tyranny is coming to an end, and we hereby pronounce humans more important than dogs. Controversial, we know. Now run along and fetch that stick

We love dogs here at *Tatler*. It's almost a calling card – that's how much we love dogs. But slowly, slowly, sometimes painfully and often shamefully, a realisation has been dawning. Some of you may bristle. Some of you may cancel your subscriptions. But others may be open to the idea. Best just to come out with it: people are more important than dogs. A person should be a man's best friend. Not a dog.

If you went to an old-fashioned boarding school at seven, then of course you save all your love for those furry friends: to you, presumably, humans only speak the language of abandonment. But perhaps it's time to evolve beyond saving our truest feelings for canines. In other words, it's time to be the man (or woman) your dog thinks you are. But most likely man, right?



So here's an idea: tell your children you love *them*, not your dog. Or tell your wife she's beautiful, not your dog. Or tell your husband he's clever, not your dog. Or as well as your dog. Whatever gets you through the night. If your relationship with a dog is more profound than any relationship you have ever had with a human, then... well, maybe that's just the way you want it. And good luck.

The thing is, we've decided that however expressive dogs may be, however sensitive and instinctive ('She ▷

PHOTOGRAPHS: SHUTTERSTOCK, PRESS ASSOCIATION

◁ just knows when I'm going away' and all that jazz), they can't tell jokes or give advice. They can comfort. They can distract. They can amuse you (bit same-same but still...) and they can stand by you.

But it occurs to us that, in an age when we can and should expect more of people in terms of feeeeeeelings, where dog lovers are fine, dog obsessives are problematic. For a start, it's a bore to have such people to stay, because no limits are allowed to be imposed on their canine – the pooing and farting and moulting and yapping and stealing of food and chewing of furniture and biting of children and savaging of sheep and peeing on curtains are always someone else's fault. Which gets tedious.

Loving your dog and only your dog doesn't score you points. It's the easy way, the coward's way. It doesn't contribute towards the good of humanity, the richness of society or one's own personal growth. Hitler loved his dog.

So let us say again: we love dogs. We celebrate them with almost embarrassing frequency. But we love people just that crucial bit more. We'll leave that with you. Something to think on... ***AR***



Bella Buchanan, Emily Dyer and Olly Markeson with Lulu

HOW TO TRANSFER YOUR AFFECTIONS TO HUMANS

By Will Napier, Harley Street psychologist

Mammals in general must be given credit for having the ability to attach to significant others. We like to feel safe, to feel loved, to belong. The downside of humans is their unreliability in this regard. The attraction of attachment to dogs is that they offer unconditional love and affection and they listen very well, without interrupting. Research shows that owning a dog lowers blood pressure, raises immunity and reduces anxiety. For some people, though, it can be a way to avoid the disappointments of attachment to humans. Investing more of your time and emotion in humans means playing for higher stakes. There is more risk of disappointment, yes, but more potential for the joy of a truly connected and meaningful life.

TATLER'S NAUGHTIEST DOGS



TWIGLET THE BORDER COLLIE

Lady Alexandra Elletson's collie is cunning. So cunning that she worked out that every Sunday at precisely 1pm another dog in her Wiltshire village was given a plate of roast chicken or lamb by its owners. So Twiglet started visiting, elbowing the other dog out of the way when no one was looking and snaffling the grub herself.



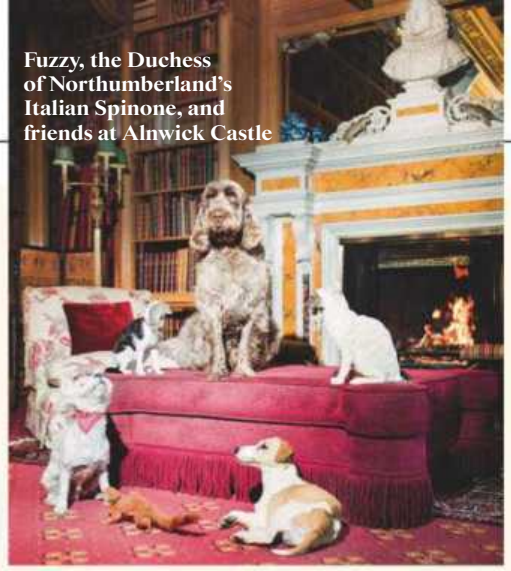
DISCO RITA THE WHIPPET

Disco Rita, the badass whippet belonging to PR queen Annabel Simpson, is the leader of a Wormwood Scrubs dog gang. 'Every bitch wants to be her and every dog wants to be with her,' says Annabel. 'She bites bottoms to keep the crew in order and can outrun anyone.' She also loves house and disco music.



DAISY THE DALMATIAN

Lady Eliza Manners' eight-year-old Dalmatian has learned to open doors at home in Belvoir Castle. 'Daisy is an absolute pig,' says Eliza. 'Her favourite habit is scoffing whatever's on the kitchen counter or in the bins.'


Fuzzy, the Duchess of Northumberland's Italian Spinone, and friends at Alnwick Castle

THE NEW DOG RULES

Pin them up in his dog basket...

1 Dogs will not sleep on beds. Especially not beneath the duvet. Having a dog in bed is unsanitary and does nothing for your sex life. Unless you're into that, in which case you need serious help.

2 Dogs, especially black Labradors, will not reach into the dishwasher to lick the dirty plates. It is unacceptable to casually laugh this off as a 'pre-clean'.


Bella and Prince Michael of Kent

3 Dogs will not sit at the table with humans and be fed morsels by hand as if enjoying themselves at a Roman feast.

4 If you walk into a drawing room and there is no space on the sofas because there are dogs lolling all over them, you are allowed to gently but firmly remove a dog so that you can sit down.

5 All dogs must be trained from birth not to poke their noses in your front or back bottom.

6 Dogs will not be carried in handbags.

7 All dogs must be talked to in your normal human voice. Not in a weirdly high-pitched, coochy-coochy-coo approximation of it.

8 Dogs will eat dog food. Dogs will not eat steak from Lidgate's or organic, gluten-free, dairy-free dog biscuits.

9 Dogs will not be made to look ridiculous and also a bit embarrassed by being dressed in cable-knit cashmere jerseys.

10 There will be no puppy showers.


Sir Maximilian & Michael Ashton

TATLER'S NAUGHTIEST DOGS



WALLY THE JACK RUSSELL

'We have had several paternity suits in the village,' says Daph Hanbury of her priapic eight-year-old Jack Russell, Wally, who lives with her in West Sussex. He is also a terrible shooting dog. 'Many a happy day on the moor ruining a good line,' says Daph.



VICHZY THE HUNGARIAN VISZLA

Rupert and Charlotte de Klee's Hungarian Viszla is a bouncy 12-year-old with a stone fixation. Should she come across a stone, she will pick it up in her mouth and lay it down at your feet. Or in your lap, if you are seated. Or on your foot, if you're standing still. If you ignore this, Vichzy will prompt you with a bark.



MR PIG AND BABY G, PUGS

The Dryer family's pugs are snuffly creatures who like pottering about the rose beds of their Oxfordshire garden. But the odd house party has ended in disaster when guests have trodden in little 'presents' the pugs left under dining-room chairs or all over the kitchen tiles.

PHOTOGRAPHS: MARK COCKSEDGE, ALEX WILSON, DAFYDD JONES, SHUTTERSTOCK



Viscountess Glenapp with Caspar and *Tatler* social editor Tibbs Jenkins

The dog's day will NEVER be over

My heart belongs to doggie, says Viscountess Glenapp

Truthfully, when was the last time a relation was as happy to see you as your dog? That's why dogs still rule over humans. My parents gave me a French bulldog called Caspar for my 17th birthday (they gave my brother David a Labrador), and he proved the best present I ever had. His wise little face always brings meaning to the glummest of days. His love of a good party means he often stays up so late that his bed by the Aga in Oxfordshire is commandeered by less fastidious guests. Really, it makes perfect sense for a nation not all that thrilled about expressing itself to anthropomorphise our dogs as bona-fido (sorry) family members. I love you, Caspar, and yes, of course, please feel free to eat my steak right off my plate.



SIX SIGNS THAT YOU, THE DOG OWNER, NEED HELP

1 You have sex in front of your dog (see 'The New Dog Rules' for further guidance). We have heard of one peer who owns a wildly unruly Jack Russell that barks along in time to female moaning. Its master solves the problem by placing his hands over his lover's mouth to quieten her – and, thus, his dog. (This is unacceptable, btw.)

2 You like your dog's farts.

3 You celebrate your dog's birthday.

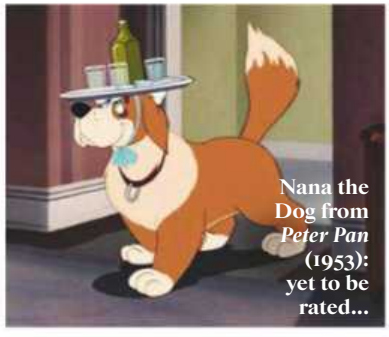
4 You tell your dog you love it more than anyone else.

5 Your dog has its own Twitter account.

6 You have more photos of your dog on your phone than you do of your children.



Florence Otedola's pugs, Bertie and Gizman



Nana the Dog from *Peter Pan* (1953): yet to be rated...

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE STILL SO SAD ABOUT MARLEY & ME...

...that you daren't ever watch another film about dogs

Look up a website called *doesthedogdie.com* and type in whatever film you want to watch. The site will give you a happy rating (a smiley dog) or a sad rating (a dog crying) depending on whether the plotline involves any dog deaths. If anyone catches you using it, pretend you are looking up a rating for your children.



SELF-HELP FOR SEX ADDICTS

Charlotte Edwardes on the new must-go meeting for people who can only think about one thing...

I'm listening to Victoria*, a woman with a voice like Joanna Lumley's, talking about a chilly English childhood so devoid of affection that she spent the first 20 years of her adult life in a binge-fast cycle of brutal promiscuity. It's an incongruous pairing, the lulling plummy whisper and the talk of dead-eyed sex.

Victoria, 44, is a 'love addict'. Opposite her, Gemma, a 38-year-old yoga blonde in leopard-print leggings, is also a love addict. Tania, in an oversized anorak, is a 'love anorexic'. I've declined a label. I'm at this meeting because a nervous friend has asked me to hold her hand – but I have to admit I'm curious. In Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous (SLAA), six meetings are recommended before choosing from a range of addictions, including sex, love, relationship, fantasy, romance, emotional anorexia and co-dependency.

SLAA is not new. Founded in the US in 1976 by a member of AA, it is also known as the Augustine Fellowship (after the great sex-addict saint), originally for fear of offending congregations in the church halls where early meetings were held. But I'd never heard of it. Then, suddenly, everyone was talking about it. People credited it for getting them out of bad marriages, toxic relationships and the thrill-slump cycle of app dating. It's a kinder version of Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA), they said – more specific than Co-Dependents Anonymous (CoDA), which isn't just about romantic relationships.

SLAA discourages media coverage (those mentioned here gave permission) and won't release official attendance figures. One member tells me that numbers have swelled recently. 'Our group has grown five or six times in two years,' he says, adding that new meetings – including single-sex and online – are sprouting up all the time.

'Love addiction' in psychology predates 'sex addiction' by nearly 50 years, but the latter is better known. Ironically, it's the least sexy of all addictions. We saw Michael Fassbender finding no solace in a string of seedy encounters in *Shame*. We heard celebrities – Tiger Woods, Dominique Strauss-Kahn – deploy the term as a get-out-of-jail-free card after being caught with their pants down. Or so it seemed.

Psychiatrists estimate that as many as three to six per cent of people could be sex addicts. And while women can be sex addicts too, the majority, says Dr Mark Collins, a consultant psychiatrist at the Priory, tend to be male: 'Love addicts are more often female.'

Technology brings opportunities for instant sex with mass availability

So what is love addiction? Dr Thaddeus Birchard, founder of the specialist Marylebone Clinic in London, defines it as 'a preoccupation with relationships, romantic infatuation and intrigue'. He admits that this can be confusing. 'There is a fine line between normal and out-of-control,' he says. In SLAA parlance, for example, 'flirting' can be innocent, but 'intrigue' (keeping flirtations with unsuitable people alive by texting, for instance) can be risky. 'Especially if you can't stop thinking about them.'

And the problem with love addiction is that 'the brain chemistry of romantic attraction is a bit out-of-control by its nature. People in love can't think of anything else; they feel great, everything's light.' But it becomes harmful, Birchard says, 'if you cut out friends and can't work. Some people are constantly falling in love and completely preoccupied with it.' Birchard offers a four-point self-assessment for gauging if you are out of control. Do you do crazy, damaging things, like staying on the phone all night, or engaging in inappropriate relationships? Do you continue to do this in spite of harmful consequences? Do you try to stop but can't? Does your behaviour have a function – does it anaesthetise feelings of shame or loneliness or stress?

The 'rooms', as meetings are known in the 12-step fellowships, provide group support. Today's takes place in a hall in a flashy postcode in central London. Outside, there are £8m homes with jasmine spilling over garden walls. Inside, it's functional: a cluttered notice board, a gurgling air-conditioning unit, the distinct smell of Murray Mints. There are about 30 of us, aged from mid-20s to 70s. My chair foghorns when I make way for a latecomer. I feel shame just being here. Is it bad to like sex?

The first thing I notice is how normal everyone is – characters you'd meet at a dinner party or a cricket match. Someone drops a Mulberry bag by my foot. Three seats down, a Chanel jacket is thrown over a chair. But the conversation is intimate. Victoria nutshells her problem: emotional neglect. She's agreed to sex she didn't want in the hope it would bring love. It didn't. Now she wants to restore her self-esteem – insomuch as it can be restored.

Then Gemma starts talking about 'magical thinking'. She builds huge fantasies around

AM I A LOVE ADDICT?

Do you find yourself unable to stop seeing a specific person even though you know it's destructive?
Do you try to hide your sexual or romantic activities?
Do you get 'high' and 'crash' from sex and/or romance?
Have you had sex at inappropriate times in inappropriate places and/or with inappropriate people?
Do you break your own rules concerning your sexual or romantic behaviour?
Have you had sex with someone you didn't want to have sex with?
Do you believe sex and/or a relationship will make your life better?
Do you believe a relationship can 'fix' you?
Do you feel desperation or uneasiness when away from your partner?
Do you feel miserable about your need for sex/your lover?
Do you have a habit of repeating bad relationships?

OR A LOVE ANOREXIC?

Do you go for long periods without being involved in a sexual or romantic relationship?
Do you habitually panic or push people away when they get too close?
Do you feel uncomfortable when offered nurturing?
Do you try to completely control emotions?
Do you dread encountering someone you find attractive?
Do you feel safer when a relationship stays at the level of flirting or intrigue?

For more information, go to slaauk.org

* ALL NAMES HAVE BEEN CHANGED. PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY IMAGES

men she's just met. Is this the One? The knight? She overanalyses texts, takes days off to prepare for dates. Her average 'relationship' lasts two weeks. After they've left, she feels desperate. 'I can't understand why,' she says. Then she starts again. Gemma scares me. Yet she's stating with laudable honesty what some women do secretly. And the 'fairytale' promises of love and happiness ever after are a hallmark of the childhood of another attendee, a brunette in an off-the-shoulder top. It's been her form of escape ever since.

A timekeeper signals each speaker when three minutes are up. There's a language: 'sharing' is saying how you feel; 'bottom-line behaviours' are activities you stop with guidance from an SLAA 'sponsor'; 'acting out' is engaging in addictive behaviour; a 'trigger' is something that makes you want to 'act out'; a 'qualifier' is someone who allows you repeat patterns. And there's literature – on the table behind me are leaflets with titles like '40 Questions for Self-Diagnosis' and 'Romantic Obsession'. I scuttle out clutching a few and discover, in 'Anorexia: Sexual, Social and Emotional', that anorexics 'may be the members who... disappear the instant the meeting is over'. Ha! A label?

In this context, anorexia is the avoidance of relationships and emotional intimacy (this doesn't rule out promiscuity to hide avoidance). According to Dr Collins, it's the 'mirror reverse' of the compulsive behaviour of love and sex addicts. But they are treated together – like food anorexia and bulimia – because 'they are two sides of the same coin'.

At my third meeting, in another gilded part of town, a man in jeans and Converse starts talking about the hundreds of women he slept with for 'affirmation'. One man cheats because he can't stand 'the emptiness' of business trips; another can't visit parks for fear of being 'triggered' by skimpily dressed women. Many say they've come to SLAA via AA or Narcotics Anonymous (NA). One calls it his 'primary addiction' and says the others are 'symptoms'.

'Hi, I'm Richard, I'm a sex addict,' begins another attendee. 'Hi, Richard,' we chorus. He used to work in politics. Threw it all away. Instead he became addicted to high-risk casual sex: prostitutes, assistants, friends' wives – and daughters. Hard to imagine now, he jokes at his own expense. And then he talks about an insatiable drive for affection that drove him to sexual despair. Afterwards, I learn that Richard went to boarding school aged six. Dr Birchard says an old-fashioned boarding-school background is a 'profile' he sees a lot. He notes that the 'detached mother' is often the issue. 'In America there are a high number of addicts who have experienced physical or sexual abuse in childhood. In Britain we see more emotional abuse or neglect.' Dr Collins agrees. 'Especially in previous generations, the English have had an emotionally repressed style of parenting. That emotional attitude is one form of deprivation. Parenting is supposed to be straightforward: put a roof over their heads, stop baddies, provide emotional support to ensure that they feel OK about themselves. Nurture that inner self-esteem with love.' Some of those who lack that nurture, he adds, are looking to fix the hole in their head or psyche. 'All this stuff – abuse, neglect, repression, lack of hugs and comfort,' he says, creates pain. And some people seek to anaesthetise that pain by 'acting out'.



And there are factors for addiction, including genetic predisposition. Can 'behaviours' really be addictive? According to Dr Collins, 'sex – like cocaine and amphetamines – creates massive spurts of dopamine in the brain. Love creates oxytocin – the "love hormone" released after childbirth.'

Dr Birchard points out that this makes recovery for sex and love addiction harder. 'Your body gets used to not having alcohol or cocaine. With internally generated chemistry, there's no stop to the bottle. We are biologically predetermined to be sexual. You have to learn to manage it.' Dr Collins says that while attitudes to parenting have thawed, there are new dangers. 'Flood London with heroin and the number of addicts will increase,' he says. 'In the same way, technology brings porn, but also Tinder, Grindr, Snapchat. These are opportunities for instant sex with mass availability. If you hit an obstacle with one partner, get another. Some do that a few times, others get into a pattern of getting high from short-term connections. And there's still the distorted forms: people having sex, sex, sex, when all they've ever wanted is love.' □

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MONEY-COUTTS THAWING US-SOVIET RELATIONS WITH REAGAN AND GORBACHEV AT THE 1985 GENEVA SUMMIT...

How to be a Sloane negotiator

Sophia Money-Coutts learns that toffs can be tough too

Here's a question: you want to have your drawing room re-wallpapered but the rococo Zoffany print is £143 a metre. Do you:

A) Pay up because that's the price, but feel sick and a bit sweaty as you hand over the credit card?

B) Ask the sales lady if there's anything she can do cost-wise because you need 100 metres, then skip home joyfully when you get 20 per cent off?

If you're British, then you're probably person 'A' and have the negotiating skills of a sausage. Bargaining is seen as embarrassing, a bit infra dig, and haggling over rolls of wallpaper, a pre-nup, salary raises or the school fees feels awkward. It's bad manners to be demanding, isn't it? 'I want never gets,' said Nanny. So we do ANYTHING to avoid seeming bumptious.

I myself am one of these lily-livered sorts, saying 'yes' when I mean 'no', and generally trembling my way through life like Walter the Softy. Friends still fall about laughing recalling the time in India when I was trying to buy a painting of some fishermen. The salesman puffed up his chest and opened his bidding at an exorbitant sum and, panicked about offending him, I offered 10 rupees less. Roughly 10p. He looked quite sad but quickly shook my hand and I started counting out the notes. I expect soon after he retired, having bought his house and a new car.

This makes me a 'floppy', according to Stephen Hartley-Brewer, who runs Hartley-Brewer Negotiation Consultants. It's one of the few coaching businesses that exist solely to train people – largely City suits – in the art of negotiating. He charges £22,050 for a three-day course for 12 people. 'My business concentrates on corporates,' says Stephen, who took over the firm from his father, also a negotiating coach, in 2010. 'But you use the same skills whatever the situation, because if you can't get a tenner off a case of wine, why should you back yourself to get £10m off buying a company?' Why indeed. You won't get anywhere in the City if you're floppy.

'We're all brought up to be terribly polite,' adds Stephen. 'And, of course, even in big, tough corporate negotiations you must remain polite. But there's a difference between being firm and being a floppy. You can actually be polite *and* firm, but many people don't understand that.'

Someone who does get this is Quintessentially founder Ben Elliot. 'I lived in America for years and found that British politeness goes a long way. The most important thing is knowing what you want and sticking to your guns.' Stephen agrees, telling me a story to demonstrate. 'Take these shoes, for example,' he says, nodding at his feet, cased in smart navy brogues. 'I was in a shoe shop in Italy where there were three pairs I liked. I was probably going to buy them all, but instead I said, "Well, I've tried these ones and I like the other two pairs, but I've got to take them all the way back to the UK, so I'm umming and aahing. If you can give me 30 percent off the other two then I'll take them."' They settled at 20 per cent. 'It's not impolite to ask, and now I smile every time I put them on,' says Stephen.

If the thought of haggling like a Moroccan carpet salesman in Russell & Bromley makes you come over all faint, Stephen has a few ▷

PORTRAITS BY MARK COCKSEDGE. PHOTOGRAPH: CAMERA PRESS. SOPHIA MONEY-COUTTS WEARS SILK & COTTON DRESS, £1,355, BY ROLAND MOURET. SUEDE HEELS, £435, BY CHARLOTTE OLYMPIA


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◁ tips. These include playing the 'beauty contest' card, which means saying things like 'I can get this pink hat cheaper elsewhere, but if you drop the price, I'll take it now,' and using excuses. 'Like "I'm a first-time customer,"' says Stephen. 'Or "'I'm a repeat customer.'" You can try either. And smile. That helps too.' So it's a bit like flirting, this negotiating business? Stephen does a little frown at me. 'Fluttering your eyelashes and licking your lips is probably out of place in the boardroom,' he says, 'but charm is a potent weapon in any negotiation.'

Stephen is a rare 'firm' in a sea of floppies, and the bad news is that Brits are getting worse at negotiating, according to another top business coach. 'For people to develop the best negotiating skills, you're talking a lifetime,' says Mike Roberts. Mike, terrifyingly, maintains eye contact with you at all times – one of his tips, because it demonstrates confidence. He honed his art in the Seventies in industrial negotiations for trade unions in Liverpool and Glasgow, and then decided to set up a firm, Sharp Practices, to teach others what he'd learned.

The trouble these days, Mike says, is that we've become idle about face-to-face conversations, relying on email or texting instead, and so are increasingly poor at 'difficult' conversations. 'Though to me, it seems there aren't any difficult conversations if you've planned it,' he says. Mike is a big planner. That's another tip – it's all about knowing what you want to begin with. Looking for a whopping divorce settlement? Prepare carefully first.

'The English don't like to negotiate over money,' says Sandra Davis, a lawyer at Mishcon de Reya, who won Jamie Cooper-Hohn what is believed to be Britain's biggest divorce settlement – £337m – from her ex-husband, Chris, last year. 'There is always a key to unlocking a negotiation – sometimes you can just wear down your opponent, sometimes saying nothing works best.' How do you know when to speak or when to shut up? That's just a matter of experience, says Sandra. But it's worth bearing in mind the one-liner from an American called Herb Cohen, who's advised seven US presidents, including Jimmy Carter, helping him with the Iranian hostage crisis in 1979. 'I care... but not that much!' is Herb's mantra. In other words, don't let on to the other side that you mind more than they do about whatever's at stake.

The real key to becoming an expert negotiator is practice. With the builders, with the estate agent, with your colleagues, with the florist, with anyone you could feasibly barter with. 'If you don't ask, you don't get,' says one negotiator who buys London properties for the Qataris.

Duly noted, I start firming up. Baby steps to begin with, such as saying no to things I would previously, pathetically, have said yes to. 'No' to boring parties. And 'no' to friends who say things like, 'Shall we meet for lunch at the pub near me? It should only take you 45 minutes on the District line.'

Empowered, I find myself pottering in a garden centre one weekend where I spy an old cheese cupboard. That, I decide, would make a pretty side table in my sitting room. The label says '£100'.

'I love that white cupboard,' I tell the man behind the till, 'but the door isn't closing properly and it's a bit grubby.'

'That's because it's *distressed*,' replies the man. 'It's supposed to look like that.'

'Ah,' I say, maintaining eye contact. 'Is there any chance I could give you £80 in cash and take it now?' He laughs, which makes me nervous. Do I not sound serious? 'Go on then, call it £90 and you've got a deal.'

So I probably won't be leading a boardroom takeover anytime soon. But it's a start. □

GET WHAT YOU WANT AND BE TOTALLY CHARMING AT THE SAME TIME

1 Look them in the eye and smile. Often forgotten.
2 Know exactly what you're after in the first place and ask for it. No point in sulking over the cost of a villa in Capri for a fortnight if you were too wimpy to ask for a discount to begin with.
3 Be firm, NOT floppy. The British often think 'assertive' is a dirty word. It isn't.
4 Understand your audience. 'The Greeks and the Iranians are the toughest negotiators out there,' says a former ambassador. Steel yourself appropriately.
5 If a client has come to your office, don't just show them the door – walk them all the way to the street, saying, 'Let me take you down.' It's sweetly courtly, and cunningly gives you five more minutes to establish a rapport with them.
6 If your target says something with which you disagree, say, 'Yes, and there is another point of view...' Never use 'but'.
7 Never interrupt or attempt to talk across or over them, no matter how outrageously they are behaving. Let them carry on and on and, eventually, they will stop.
8 Flatter, flatter, flatter. Research your target vigorously without making it obvious that you're a potential stalker. If you've discussed their children's names before, remember them.

PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY IMAGES, REX FEATURES. CLOTHES, AS BEFORE. HAIR BY DANI METCALFE. MAKE-UP BY CLAUDINE BLYTHMAN, USING BOBBI BROWN. STYLED BY SOPHIE GOODWIN

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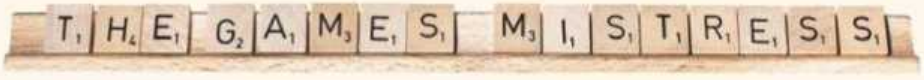
A bespoke stamp for your home-laid eggs – so chick! By Annabel Rivkin and Ailsa Miller

Home-laid eggs are a great statement of bucolic (or, God forbid, hipster) commitment. They are a manageable, picturesque pigeon step towards sustainability. They are an excellent dinner-party present – managing to be both smugly presented and gratefully received, which is unusual. But turning up with your precious, delicate eggs in a knackered, smeared, slightly flaccid Sainsbury's box murders the illusion of pastoral perfection. First, it proves that you sometimes buy in *les oeufs*. Second, it makes the recipient a bit windy about whether or not the besmirched box will leave traces of chicken shit on their countertop or console table or wherever else you happen to deposit it.

So, as sure as eggs is eggs (and for the purposes of this piece, let's assume that eggs *is* eggs), you need a Fraser & Parsley egg-box stamp: big, fat, glorious Orpington hen (no one need know if your chickens are a bit patchy and angry-looking), with the name of the layer or the chicken ticklers, and the house or farm inked onto a nice, clean egg carton. Ooh, and suddenly you're a brand...



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Whatever you do, don't shoot the sheriff. By Emma Kennedy

Backs straight, eyes forward, knees bent and we're off, skimming the breeze like a newly slung arrow, because this month we're journeying to the outskirts of Nottingham. No, not to Junction 25 off the M1, but to a curious border post in medieval times where you are a merchant and you've got to negotiate your way past a highly suspicious and highly corrupt sheriff. As you do.

Sheriff of Nottingham is a tip-top bluffing board game for three to five people. You pick a merchant card (they come in a range of lovely colours with – WAIT FOR IT – matching bags), and then take it in turns to assume the role of the suspecting sheriff.

'Hang on, Emma,' you whisper. 'Did you just say matching bag?'

Yes. Yes, I did. Try and contain yourself.

So everyone takes six goods cards. Some of these are green, which means they are totally legit, stuff like eggs and apples; but others, like mead or silk, are red – the sexy colour of naughtiness. These are contraband and it's these cards you want to try and sneak past the checkpoint into the city.

Stick up to five of your cards into your lovely bag (did I say it was matching?), and then present it to the sheriff and declare your goods. This is where the lying, bribing and general slipperiness begins, and penalties are paid by either merchant or sheriff, depending on who believed whom. The biggest sneak wins. Huzzah! Total fibbing fun. *£25.49, at amazon.co.uk*



PHOTOGRAPHS: JODY TODD, ISTOCK


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'AND THEN SHE SAID...': JANET LEIGH & ELIZABETH TAYLOR, 1955

GOSSIP MORE, LIVE LONGER

Finally, the scientists have proven what we here at Tatler have always known to be true. Pass it on, says Quentin Letts

Sylvia Townsend Warner was one of those mid-20th-century leftie bluestockings who wore Woody Allen spectacles and rasped away in a pukka voice tarred by fags. A year after Margaret Thatcher became Tory leader in 1975, Townsend Warner wrote to a friend: 'Can you suggest any suitable aspersions to spread about Mrs Thatcher? It is idle to suggest that she has unnatural relations with Mrs [Barbara] Castle; what is needed is something socially lower: that she eats asparagus with a knife and fork, or serves instant mash potatoes.'

Now there was a gal (Sylvia, not Maggie) who understood gossip – its rip tides of class oneupmanship, its potential for humour and impishness. The Townsend Warner plan never quite had time to work. Its progenitor died in 1978, aged 84, and Mrs T became prime minister the following year. Who is to say what would have happened if Sylvia had held on for a few more years? The Argentinians might have recruited her as a fifth columnist in the Falklands War and the British government might have been ruined by rumours that Mrs Thatcher used the word 'serviette' in front of the Queen at a Buckingham Palace banquet.

That gossipy Sylvia made it to her mid-80s (a notable age in those days) should not surprise us. Gossip keeps you young. It has a bracing, pipe-cleanerish effect on your arteries. A choice titbit will have you chuckling for hours, squeezing your knees with such glee that fellow passengers on the Tube will think you need the lav. Lovely, life-affirming, life-extending gossip!

'Gossip has a bracing, pipe-cleanerish effect on your arteries'

Indeed, an Oxford University professor of evolutionary science, Robin Dunbar, now says that gossip can help you live longer. Professor Dunbar, himself no doubt a terrific little quidnunc, babbling with the latest larks from the Oxford science circuit, says gossip helps us to 'maintain our social networks'. That, in turn, keeps us happy. Having a large group of acquaintances is, he said, the biggest thing that stops us dying except for giving up cigarettes. Jennifer Cole, a psychology lecturer at Manchester University, adds: 'If people don't gossip at all, we don't like them – we're suspicious.'

I did almost 10 years as a *Daily Telegraph* gossip columnist, although the newspaper, with its then-customary subtlety, preferred the term 'diarist'. Did my little paragraphs of who-did-what-where help *Telegraph* readers survive to a greater age? Being a gossip columnist per se was not a key to longevity, mind you. We drank too much. After a fantastically boozy lunch, one *Sunday Telegraph* colleague had returned to his desk at 135 Fleet Street and had such a furious row with his secretary that he resolved to sack her. He sat at his typewriter and bashed out a memo that read: 'You're fried.'

Political rivalries, publishers' revelries, the pratfalls, promotions, vanities and enmities of the elite – this was our fare, and it put a skip in my heel most days of that diarising decade. We didn't have the Kardashians then, thank goodness. It was *Telegraph* style to place inverted commas round the noun 'celebrity'.

Manhattan scandalmonger Liz Smith has said that 'gossip is just news running ahead of itself in a red satin dress'. Gossip can be foxy, but it is at its best when it tells us something about the power balances in our culture and its citadel. It is not so much about who's bonking whom or even whose high heel snapped at the hunt ball – though snapped high heels are always fun – as which mannerless oaf had wine thrown in his face by Anna Ford. Who has been booted out of the Garrick? Which politician's daughter has gone to work for which top-notch consulting firm? Gossip betrays the beastly little connections and tensions that can corrupt and compromise. Which is good not only for the gossips but also for our public life.

The only time the joy ever shrivelled was when the lawyers got involved. God, I hate lawyers. No fun. You'd think they themselves never gossiped, but of course they are as bad as the rest of us. They just do it more discreetly and, like the gossipy cabals in William Congreve's 1700 play *The Way of the World*, will 'come together like the Coroner's Inquest, to sit upon the murdered reputations of the week'. See? Gossip has been with us for centuries.

We had a source high (in at least two senses of that word) in the Roman Catholic church who brought us the latest tyrannies at the Brompton Oratory, where clerics with camp nicknames plotted against each other like Borgias at a

PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY IMAGES

family picnic. Another rich seam was the College of Heralds – those acid chaps who mince into the State Opening of Parliament in tabards. 'Ooh look,' said a peer one year, 'here come the Girl Guides.'

Michael Fabricant's election to the Commons in 1992 led to gossip (which persists) of a hairpiece. Ted Heath nosed out of his tortoise shell to croak, 'If that's a wig, well, it's not a very good one'.

There was the time we heard that an aged nobleman in the Queen Mother's infamously extravagant household was so parsimonious that he kept the same Remembrance Day poppy from year to year, simply ironing it every November. And I was once lunching beside Dame Barbara Cartland, romantic novelist and doyenne of pink chiffon, when one of her vast eyelashes fell into her green salad. A waitress shrieked, mistaking it for a caterpillar. Dame Barbara just picked up the lash, licked it and stuck it back on her denuded headlamp.

The one sort of gossip we avoided was anything 'below the navel'. To this day, I leave marriage bust-ups to others. Too bruising. Our former editor Bill Deedes (who had moonlighted as a diarist while working as a government minister) said that the perfect gossip item should contain 'one fact, one generalisation, one very slight inaccuracy' – Bill had something of a lisp, so this came out as 'shlight inaccurashy'. A minor slip would generate letters and that would show the paper's managers that people were reading the column.

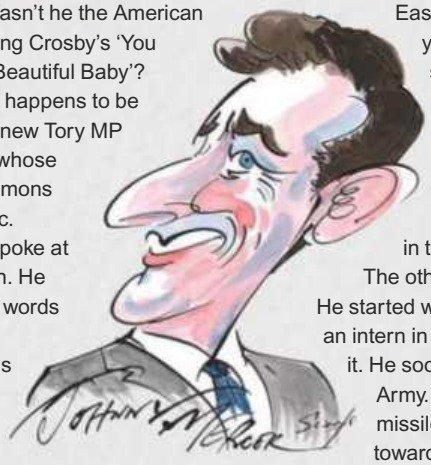
Gossip creates a sense of clubbishness, another word for 'society', and that can sharpen a code of manners. It makes us better informed. American political hostess Alice Roosevelt Longworth purred, 'If you haven't anything good to say about anyone, come and sit by me.' And did you know that one synonym for 'gossip' is 'tattle', from which comes the fine name *Tatler*?

Gossip is the antidote to flattery and the various grotesqueries of public relations. Enjoy it. It is your civic duty. As the French star Amanda Lear so perfectly put it: 'I hate to spread rumours, but what else can one do with them?' □

Quentin Letts

JOHNNY MERCER

The battle-hardened Tory MP whose maiden speech stunned the Commons



JOHNNY Mercer? Wasn't he the American lyricist who wrote Bing Crosby's 'You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby'? Well, yes, but it also happens to be the name of the dashing new Tory MP for Plymouth Moor View whose debut speech in the Commons became an instant classic. Ex-Army officer Mercer spoke at a prolonged, highish pitch. He did not so much utter the words as project them from the battlements. Strong words too – about the neglect of mental illness in the British armed forces.

As the speech continued, word went round the parliamentary estate that something special was happening. Members scurried to the chamber to be able to say, 'I was there when Mercer made his maiden.' The man himself, with his collar and fringe askew, may not have looked particularly imposing. He was not swankily clever or posh or innovative. Yet he mesmerised the House.

With his dark hair and peachy cheeks, handsome Mr Mercer could be a *Boy's Own* hero. (He partly funded his election campaign by starring in a steamy TV ad for Dove soap.) Too many maiden speeches are plodding accounts of how an MP previously worked as a spin doctor or local councillor. Mercer, who did three combat tours in Afghanistan, gave a more scintillating account of his past life, describing how he once had a lance bombardier die in his arms. His dead comrade had been 'a man of colossal courage' who had fallen in close-quarters fighting at an hour when most of Britain was 'still in a morning slumber'. As Mercer declaimed those words in the Commons, you could have heard a sparrow beat its wings.

There is no peacocking, no palaver, about this gallant 35-year-old. He walks round Westminster with the trudge of an infantryman carrying a heavy backpack through foreign fields. He served in 29 Commando Regiment Royal Artillery, among other units, you see. Those boys don't preen like certain other outfits.

Mercer was educated at a state school before winning a music scholarship to Eastbourne College. The young shaver had the sweetest, most fluting of trebles, but when his voice dropped, he sounded like a boar honking for a mate. Even so, one of his nicknames in the Army was 'Choirboy'. The other was '105 Sniper'.

He started work in the City in 2000 as an intern in life assurance and hated it. He soon quit and joined the Army. His speciality was guiding missiles and other ordnance towards targets while in close contact with the enemy. By the time he left, in 2014, he was a captain.

His mother was a nurse, his father a branch manager with Lloyds Bank. It was a large family – seven siblings – and entirely non-political, though strictly Baptist. Any fighting in the Mercer blood was previously of the sea-dog variety. A great-uncle, Jack Cornwell, won a posthumous VC at Jutland and his grandfather and three brothers were in the Royal Navy.

Johnny is not some lifelong rightie. He had his political interests sparked when he saw how increasingly difficult it was to sell the Afghan mission to his men. With his leadership experience in small counter-insurgency units, he wondered if he could help reconnect Westminster to the military. He bagged Plymouth Moor View (once Michael Foot's seat) from Labour at the general election after encouragement from a neighbouring Tory MP, Gary Streeter, and is married to Felicity. They have two little girls and live in a crumbly cottage on Dartmoor. 'Puffing Johnny' runs on the moor in an effort to stay fit.

In any spare time, he leaps into small boats – RIBs – and zooms over to France on his own, the salt air rifling through his sticky-uppy fringe, his dark eyes scanning the horizon for trouble, just as they did during those long, hot days in Helmand. The French coastguard have come to know him personally. 'Ze mad Monsieur Mercer!' Mad, maybe, *mais* magnificent.

Quentin Letts writes for the Daily Mail.

Illustrated by GERALD SCARFE

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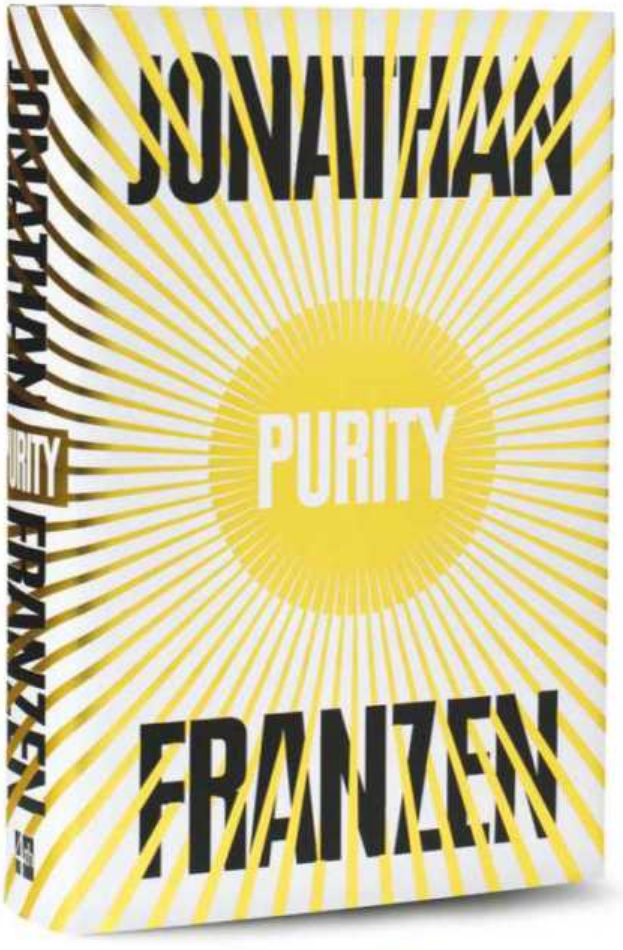
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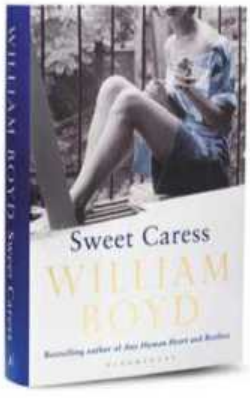


Who said dysfunction can't be fun?
By Sebastian Shakespeare



PURITY BY JONATHAN FRANZEN *(Fourth Estate, £20)*
You cannot fail to love the heroine of Jonathan Franzen's latest novel. Purity, known as Pip, is sarcastic and witty, and her job is cold-calling for a product she doesn't understand, which leads to hilarious exchanges with clients. Burdened with an £85,000 student debt, a mentally unstable mother and a thwarted love life, she is trying, and failing, to make her way in the world. Like her Dickensian namesake, she doesn't know who her father is. A chance encounter with a German peace activist leads to an internship with the Sunlight Project, an internet-leaking organisation based in Bolivia and run by Andreas Wolf, a Julian Assange-like figure who inspires devotion among his followers. Pip hopes that he might also unlock the secret of her paternity.

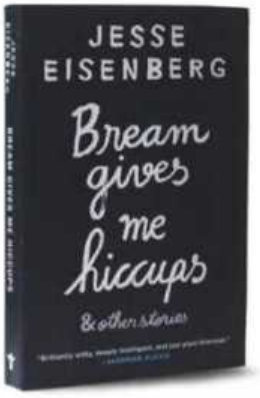
Franzen excels at portraying dysfunctional relationships, as he's shown in his previous novels, *The Corrections* and *Freedom*. He is also a master of the vast, sprawling narrative. His supporting cast of characters includes a vivid and diverse array of crackpots, anarchists and squatters. Indeed, there's so much going on that you sometimes wish the tale could be more tightly focused. When Pip goes missing from the story, you long for her to return (as she inevitably does) for the loose ends to be tied up. But Franzen's elegant and rhythmic prose successfully carries you along in its wake – his novel is never less than entertaining and an unalloyed pleasure to read.



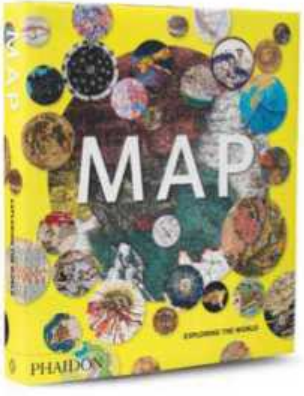
SWEET CARESS BY WILLIAM BOYD
(Bloomsbury, £18.99)
Another rip-roaring 'cradle to grave' novel from Boyd, telling the story of photographer Amory Clay, born in 1908 and witness to many major events of the 20th century. After surviving a dramatic near-drowning, Amory makes her way in Twenties Berlin, Second World War France and Sixties Vietnam. Interwoven are 70 photographs supposedly taken by her, lending the fictional narrative extra realism.



STORIES FROM OTHER PLACES BY NICHOLAS SHAKESPEARE
(Harvill Secker, £16.99)
A majestic collection of stories set in India, Argentina, Canada and Down Under. The opening novella, *Oddfellows*, is based on a true story, evoking the first time jihad came to Australia – in 1915. It was the only attack to occur on Australian soil during the First World War. A feast of a book, combining exotic locales and universal truths. Full disclosure: the author ain't heavy, he's my brother.



BREAM GIVES ME HICCUPS & OTHER STORIES BY JESSE EISENBERG
(Grove Press, £14.99)
He sure can act, and boy, can he write. The debut collection of stories by the Oscar-nominated *Social Network* star is well observed, friskily written and a hoot. The title comes from a series of *New Yorker* stories Eisenberg wrote from the point of view of a nine-year-old boy whose mother takes him to expensive LA restaurants so she can bill her ex-husband.



MAP: EXPLORING THE WORLD
(Phaidon, £39.95)
From the Ordnance Survey to Google Earth, and from Mercator to Phyllis Pearsall of the A–Z, this book comprises 300 beautiful, not necessarily strictly geographical maps from all periods and from all around the world, exploring what they tell us about history and ourselves. Selected by academics, dealers and collectors, the contents represent 5,000 years of innovation. A fabulous book to put cartography where it belongs: on the map. □

PHOTOGRAPHS: SUDHIR PITHWA

Art for sale



Lay, lady, lay... it on thick. By Josh Spero



WOMEN OF SUBSTANCE (c.£60,000)

EVERYBODY'S THICK QUILT (2012) BY ZHU JINSHI

WHY BUY Female artists are smashing sales records, female gallerists are opening spaces and Christie's has a CEO without a Y chromosome – it's never been better to be a woman in the art world. But not every woman is as lucky, which is why Bonhams is hosting a charity art auction to support Women for Women International in its work with female Syrian refugees in Iraq. This artwork, painted so thickly you want to mash your fingers in it, is one of the specially made lots. For all its avarice, the art world can be good at giving back.
WHEN 16 September.
WHERE Bonhams, 101 New Bond Street, W1 (bonhams.com).



TROUBLEMAKER (£3,500)

PAGAR FIGURE FROM INDONESIA (c. 1920)

WHY BUY When European artists of a century ago first saw African masks, Polynesian sculptures and statues like this one, every Renaissance-derived rule of how to make art collapsed. Instead of revering perfect perspective and exact representation as art's aims, they learned other ways of seeing and creating – there might have been no cubism had Picasso not seen Cameroonian masks. It's taken almost 100 years, however, for the broader art market to catch up, and tribal (not 'primitive') art is again causing a stir. This elegant statue, carved by a priest to ward off evil spirits, looks neatly satisfied with the revolution it has wrought. Now, after all this time, it's finally being seen for its own grace and power.
WHEN 2–5 September.
WHERE Galerie Lemaire at the Tribal Art Fair, Mall Galleries, The Mall, SW1 (tribalartlondon.com).



HEAD BOY (£210,000)

POLYCHROME HEAD (2014) BY WILLIAM KENTRIDGE, SET OF FIVE

WHY BUY There are other ways of recognising people than by their faces, and Kentridge knows this. This is certainly meant to be a portrait bust – check out the scribbled eye – but it appears to be made from a financial ledger: I spend, therefore I am. Kentridge goes deeper too, showing the torn-away pieces of paper, the layers that lie beneath our accounting of ourselves. He grew up in apartheid-era South Africa, which adds further piquancy to this (believe it or not) bronze sculpture – there's so much more to us than our skin.
WHEN From 10 September.
WHERE Marian Goodman Gallery, 5–8 Lower John Street, W1 (mariangoodman.com).

PHOTOGRAPH: PEARL LAM GALLERIES

Restaurants



The wine bar is back – and this time round it's a corker, says Jeremy Wayne



Do you like wine bars? I don't – or didn't. They're neither flesh nor fowl. And how could you possibly get excited about any joint that doesn't offer gin?

But, like the times, they are a-changin'. For one thing, a wine bar isn't usually called a wine bar any more – it's more likely to be an osteria, enoteca, bacaro or bodega, or even a ca'n. For another, gin is now nearly always on the list.

At Jason Atherton's newbie, **Social Wine & Tapas**, a stone's throw from Selfridges, the clue in the name points to Spain: croquetas de jamón, tangy ibérico, succulent lomo and ballsy chorizo magno are predictable but excellent, although quite why all the meat has to be anointed with olive oil is anybody's guess. But now it starts to get interesting. There's wonderfully deconstructed pan con tomate, rendered confit duck leg and cassoulet with a fried duck egg, fat scallops with yuzu, and the crispest Szechuan-fried chipirones with togarashi (Japanese chilli) and aioli. The last one is so good it's worth leaving home for, if you're the kind of person who might leave home for a baby calamaro. Then, ducking and diving, we're back in Spain, with lip-smackingly good seafood-and-rabbit rice, cooked in a vast paella (the name of the pan it's prepared in, as well as the dish itself) and stirred constantly by a conscientious and very muscular young lady.

Downstairs, Social is cavernous, with two bars, a charcuterie counter and a biscuit-tin-sized, semi-private room that can disappear behind a curtain. With 70 covers but so many hidden spaces, this would be the perfect place to stage a French farce, or even a Spanish one.

Great as the food is – and it's often exceptional – the global wine list will need your serious attention. It's the wines of Spain I'm interested in, and all the great names are here: the powerhouses of Ribera del Duero and Rioja, the sunny reds and luscious whites of Priorat, Penedès and Empordà, the ebullient sparklers from all over. At £150, a 1997 Alión is not quite the bargain it used to be, but you only live once. Plus you can buy any wine to take away, at less than half the price. As for the music, it's louche-lite: some Bowie here, some Lou Reed there. A throwback to the golden age of wine bars? Actually, I can handle that.
At 39 James Street, W1 (020 7993 3257).

HOW MUCH
Dinner for two (without wine), about £60
WHAT TO EAT
Ibérico, chipirones, seafood-and-rabbit rice, crema catalana
WHO GOES
Jason groupies, homesick Castilians, serious wine lovers



CARROTS & AUBERGINE AT SOCIAL WINE & TAPAS



ROAST QUAIL AT MORDEN & LEA

SIDE ORDERS

MORDEN & LEA
17 Wardour Street, W1
(020 3764 2277)
Named after the cartographers who first put Soho on the map, this is a new brasserie, over two floors, from former Claridge's head chef Mark Sergeant. You'll eat really well here: tasty tartines, roast duck with garlic potatoes and gypsy tart with clotted cream, a signature dish that goes back to Sergeant's days with Gordon Ramsay.

CAFFE REI
PICK ME!
3 Hay Hill, W1
(020 3441 5505)
With its wooden benches and handsome, marble-topped refectory tables, this new Berkeley Square café from ragazzo-about-town Andrea Reitano flies its produce in daily from Italy: the freshest burrata from Puglia, the best tomatoes for pasta sauces, fennel for a salad with orange and anchovy. And as for those heavenly cannoli...

CAFE MURANO
34–36 Tavistock Street, WC2
(020 7240 3654)
Here's a great new address if you're up west, pre- or post-theatre, or just for the hell of it. The new branch of Angela Hartnett's St James's café is a bit of a stunner, with tan leather banquettes and a marble counter full of mouthwatering treats. Octopus with potatoes and paprika is full of the warm Italian South, and we loved the farfalle with rabbit and girolles.

THE BARFLY Callooh Callay, EC2

It's a truth universally acknowledged – well, at least in Shoreditch – that any bar worth its kosher salt (the best kind for salting the rim of a margarita glass) must be entered through another bar, or, better still, a mirrored wardrobe. And that's just what you do at Callooh Callay. Have the barman fix you a Swizzleton Post or two – Santa Teresa dark rum, pineapple syrup and fresh thyme – and pray to Saint Teresa you can find your way out again.
At 65 Rivington Street, EC2 (020 7739 4781)



TATLER • EVENT

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ON SATURDAY 31 OCTOBER 2015
2PM - 4PM



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Tatler and Bonpoint invite you to a frightfully fun event on Halloween day. You'll find all you need to get in the Trick-or-Treat spirit. With a chance to win a prize for the best costume, children can come dressed in their most monstrous attire. There will be a face-painter available to add the finishing touches and your little ghouls will love getting crafty with a Halloween-themed workshop. Meanwhile, a balloon artist and magician will provide wickedly good entertainment. And for the parents? Bubbles, canapés and the opportunity to shop the Bonpoint collections. A spellbinding event not to be missed!

TO BOOK YOUR TICKET

Email tatlerevents@condenast.co.uk or call 020 7152 3850. Tickets cost £20 for you and one child (under-threes go free) and include a free gift with purchase. Tickets are non-refundable and issued on a first-come, first-served basis. Limited places available so book now!

Gadgets



My round-up of the greatest apps on the market. Took me hours to find them – if only there was an app for that... By Emma Freud

APPY DAYS...



Run Pee



Drunk Dial NO!



Annoy a Teen



Fake-An-Excuse



Cuddle Bids

RUN PEE

Bladders, eh? Can't watch long movies with them; can't live without them unless you use a catheter. That didn't come out quite as snappy an opener as I had hoped, but bear with... Run Pee is an app that tells you the precise moment in any movie where you can wee without missing too much of the action, and then – just in case you still get muddled – it tells you what is happening while you urinate. You can switch on vibration alerts for each peetime (doubly useful during *Fifty Shades of Grey*) and it even lets you know if there are any extra scenes at the end of the credits, so you don't have to cross your legs through those if there's nothing to wait for bar the name of the second assistant director's driver. For a filmmaker, the nightmare scenario is when the app says your movie has infinite opportunities for a pee, possibly even the full toilet experience. And a director's dream is when it declares that in your movie, 'there are literally NO possible pee breaks during this movie – it's that good. Take a bedpan.' But here's what I love most about it – the app is sponsored by a company that sells medication for an overactive bladder. Win-win. *Free at runpee.com*

NO MORE DRUNK DIALLING

It's 8am. You wake up. Your mouth feels like the bottom of a small parrot's cage that is currently housing a whole family of large parrots and someone has mislaid the cleaning equipment. Your head is probably there, but might have been replaced by a vortex. Your palms are sweating and, on closer examination, the perspiration coming out of your body is 100 per cent vodka and slimline tonic. And then – oh, the shame – you reach for your phone... As you check what you texted after midnight, you realise you may have to leave the country. Forever. Motto – what feels like a good, well-thought-through, rational, wise-albeit-passionate opinion after a bottle of pinot grigio will definitely feel like total and utter shit the next day. My friend, if any of this is familiar, then you need this app. BEFORE you start drinking, you give it the names of anyone you are in danger of texting at your peril and it will block your ability to contact them until morning. May save several friendships, your job and your marriage. A bargain, coming in at 79p. *At apple.com/itunes or play.google.com*

ANNOY A TEEN

I am fairly fond of my children – but handling this whole teenage thing is, as far as I can tell, actual rocket science. As my formerly favourite son came home one evening last week, I greeted him with 'Hey, how was school?' To which he shouted, 'WILL YOU STOP INTERROGATING ME!' Within minutes I had downloaded this app. Play any of the various tortures to anyone in their 20s or older, and they will hear absolutely nothing. But put it on when there's a teen in the room and the constant, pulsing sound will make them literally buckle with audio pain. At which point they will agree to anything you ask and possibly even apologise for all the times they ordered you to 'chillllll'. *79p at apple.com/itunes or appszoom.com*

FAKE AN EXCUSE

On the one hand – the truth: 'I'm going to end this call because you are so ballbreakingly annoying that I am about to punch my own phone, after which I probably wouldn't be able to invoice you for the cost of a new screen.' On the other hand – the Fake-An-Excuse app: 45 different noises to get you out of a phone call. Simply click on the app in the middle of a call and it enables you to say things like, 'Oh my word, did you hear THAT! It's my front door/the ice-cream van/a wolf – I'm going to have to dash...' My favourite? Number 29. It's the noise of someone hacking into your phone, which not only gives you a great excuse to hang up, but also makes you appear far more interesting than you are. *Free at excelltechmobile.com*

CUDDLE BIDS

My final app will only work for you in America – it's an app for cuddling. It goes like this: your phone alerts you when someone in your area is looking for a cuddle – and btw, that's not a euphemism. (Well, I suppose it might be if your Tinder app is temporarily down and you aren't sure where else to turn – but for the rest of us this is all about actual cuddling.) You view their photo (or the photo of someone incredibly attractive that they posted in the hope they would get more cuddles). You then text them to arrange a place to cuddle. You meet them. You cuddle them. You say goodbye. That's it. I'm now living in New York – this is part of the reason why. *Free at cuddlebids.com*

'There are literally NO possible pee breaks during this movie – it's that good. Take a bedpan'

NEXT MONTH GADGETS THAT MAKE YOU FEEL GOOD ABOUT YOURSELF. I'M ON IT

This is me on Twitter – @emmafreud

THE WORLD OF INTERIORS

THE OCTOBER ISSUE

INCLUDING THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO THE LONDON DESIGN SEASON

ON SALE 3 SEPTEMBER





THIS PAGE, TALITA VON FURSTENBERG WEARS WOOL JUMPER, £620, BY **TOD'S**. SILK SCARF, £175; LEATHER SKIRT, £575, BOTH BY **COACH**. STICKERS ON BAG, FROM £45 EACH, BY **ANYA HINDMARCH**. LEATHER BAG, TALITA'S OWN

OPPOSITE PAGE, JACKET, £7,685, BY **GIORGIO ARMANI**. QUILTED COTTON DRESS, £1,895, BY **BURBERRY PRORSUM**. GOLD BANGLE, £355, BY **ILEANA MAKRI**



Styled by DEEP KAILEY

TALITA VON *fabulous*

Introducing Diane von Furstenberg's gorgeous granddaughter

Photographed by JASON KIM

Words by SOPHIA MONEY-COUTTS



JUMPER, £450, BY **VERSACE**. CRYSTAL-EMBROIDERED SILK TROUSERS, £3,630, BY **MICHAEL KORS**. GOLD BANGLE, £355, BY **ILEANA MAKRI**. GOLD-PLATED SILVER BANGLE, £83, BY **ALICE EDEN**. GOLD-PLATED SILVER BANGLE, £71 FOR TWO, BY **DVF**. SUEDE BOOTS, £620, BY **PIERRE HARDY**



LAMINATED COTTON-TWEED COAT, £1,550, BY **BALLY**. EMBROIDERED SILK-ORGANZA DRESS, £2,490, BY **ERDEM**



CORDUROY JUMPSUIT, £1,140, BY **CHLOE**. COTTON ROLLNECK, £129, BY **DAKS**. VELVET BAG, £1,870, BY **CHANEL**. JEWELLERY, AS BEFORE



LACE & NYLON BOMBER JACKET, £815, BY **3.1 PHILLIP LIM**. EMBROIDERED TULLE DRESS, £1,540, BY **MARIOS SCHWAB**. LEATHER BOOTS, SOCKS & JEWELLERY, AS BEFORE



JACKET, £1,408, BY **MOSCHINO**. SILK-JACQUARD KNIT DRESS, £1,650, BY **DIOR**. CALFSKIN BAG, £2,090, BY **CHANEL**. BRACELET BY **ILEANA MAKRI**, AS BEFORE



WOOL & SEQUIN CARDIGAN, £1,535, BY **MARC JACOBS**. SILK-CREPE DRESS, £635, BY **PHILOSOPHY**. TIGHTS, FROM A SELECTION, BY **VERSACE**. LEATHER BOOTS, AS BEFORE

Talita von Furstenberg might well have the finest genes in all the world. She is the granddaughter of fashion genius, wrap-dress mogul and general pop-culture icon Diane on one side and an American-born billionaire who invented duty-free shopping on the other...

Her parents are the 'two Alexes' – the Austro-Italian Prince Alex von Furstenberg and his ex-wife Alexandra, formerly Miller, who is herself another kind of royalty, having been one of the most celebrated of the Park Avenue Princesses of the Nineties. Talita's cousins include the Gettys and the 'Greeces', the offspring of Crown Prince Pavlos and Crown Princess Marie-Chantal of Greece. And Talita herself is royalty, having inherited a title from her father's side of the family. Princess Talita von Furstenberg. It's quite a name.

She certainly looks the part. Manuka-honey-coloured skin, eyes like Minstrels and the sort of silky, tumbly blonde hair that women show pictures of to their hairdresser. Aged 16, she lives in LA with her mother and 14-year-old brother and 'best friend' Tassilo, and has two years of high school left. But her Instagram account – 32,000 followers and counting – lets you nose into her madly glamorous life. Yachts on the Amalfi Coast, clouds through a Gulfstream window, snaps from Coachella, fashion shows, breakfasts in Paris, caviar in St Barth's, sunbathing with her cousin and close pal Princess Olympia of Greece at the Miller family home on Harbour Island.

And yet, despite the yachts and the jets, the villas and the handbags, Talita is a sweet, shy, American teenager who says she likes school for its 'variety' – 'I like to paint and to draw, but I also really like math, science and history.' Smart and quick-witted, she's been on the debating team for four years and is firmly behind Team Hillary. She watches *Dexter* and hangs out at Malibu beach parties with friends on the weekends – but only after doing her homework. She wants to go on to university, hopefully Columbia or Wharton. 'I do definitely see myself involved in fashion but I have a more academically structured brain, so I want to go to a university that doesn't specialise in fashion.'

Nonetheless, she's tipped as the heir to her grandmother's business, having grown up with the brand. One of her earliest memories is of going on a trip with Diane to Florence for the launch of a DVF resort collection. 'I remember being amazed by all the preparation, by seeing all the models. It was a moment when I knew that I wanted to be a part of it.'

She's ballsy too. 'I remember Talita, aged 11, telling me I was "losing my signature and was going off brand"', says Diane. 'She was right and I corrected it.' Talita laughs at this. 'I always give her little comments! But she's my role model – she's taught me everything I know.'

The inherited wisdom includes one of Diane's strictest shopping rules – 'If you're trying something on and you can picture it with at least five items from your closet, then you should get it,' explains Talita. 'But if it's, like, "I could wear this dress if I got other shoes," then it's wasteful!'

Talita herself has a useful hair tip for anyone lusting after those wavy, golden locks. 'I kind of have OCD – sometimes I wash my hair twice a day,' she says. 'But if I don't shower, I put baby powder in my hair and it works even better than dry shampoo, it looks so clean and shiny.'

So that's how you get princess hair, everyone. Although we can't promise that it'll make you look like Talita. ▷



***Left*, Alexandra von Furstenberg, *centre*, with her mother Chantal and sister Marie-Chantal, 2007**

PHOTOGRAPH: AVFHOME/INSTAGRAM



SILK DRESS, £418, BY **DVF**. CALF-HAIR & LEATHER BAG, £2,070, BY **MIU MIU**. LEATHER BOOTS, AS BEFORE. *ON RIGHT WRIST*, BANGLES BY **ILEANA MAKRI**, **ALICE EDEN** & **DVF**, AS BEFORE. *ON LEFT WRIST*, GOLD BRACELETS, £4,600 EACH, BY **CARTIER**. COTTON SOCKS, £11, BY **FALKE**

FOR STOCKISTS, SEE ADDRESS BOOK. HAIR BY MICHAEL SILVA AT THE WALL GROUP, USING BUMBLE AND BUMBLE. MAKE-UP BY JEFFREY BAUM AT ATELIER MANAGEMENT, USING CHANEL A/W 2015 & CHANEL BODY EXCELLENCE. NAILS BY ELISA WISHAN. ON-SET PRODUCTION BY PHOTOBOMB PRODUCTIONS. PRODUCTION, ELLE KORHALILLER. FASHION ASSOCIATE, AILSA MILLER

Meet the family



The Miller sisters, 1995

It's no surprise Talita is a corker – her mother and aunts are the Miller sisters. Yes, those Park Avenue Princesses who owned the Nineties

Once upon a time, there was an American-born billionaire who had three ravishing daughters. Two of them married European royals and became actual princesses, while the other married another American billionaire.

This is not the synopsis for a new Jackie Collins book. The Millers are a real-life dynasty that, in three generations, has evolved from middle-class Massachusetts to palaces and palazzos across the world.

The patriarch is Robert Warren Miller, 82, son of a Massachusetts bookkeeper, who is worth an estimated £1bn, having invented duty-free shopping in the Sixties. Together with his Ecuadorian wife, Chantal, he had three daughters – Pia, Marie-Chantal and Alexandra – and raised them in Hong Kong, where the business was based.

It was the swankiest of childhoods – they lived in a hilltop mansion overlooking the skyscrapers. There were uniformed staff. There were yachts. There were multiple residences – in New York, Paris, London and Gstaad – as well as a 32,000-acre shooting estate in Yorkshire.

The girls boarded at Le Rosey in Switzerland and went on to study in America: Pia in Washington, DC; Marie-Chantal and Alex in New York. It was the Nineties, and 'the Miller sisters' – willowy, blonde, beautiful – ascended directly to the peak of the social pyramid. They were the Park Avenue Princesses. As someone who knew them at college said: 'Everybody at Georgetown had a BMW, everyone at Brown had a BMW – but the Millers were past that league; they were the kind of girls who had a private jet to take them, straight after class, to New York for dinner and back.'

Their jokey motto, supposedly, was 'No accent, no title, no play', and so it proved. In 1992, Pia married Christopher Getty, whose oil-royal family had a fortune of £3.2bn. Three years later, Marie-Chantal married Crown Prince Pavlos of Greece in London, wearing a pearl-encrusted Valentino dress in front of the biggest gathering of international royalty since the Queen and Prince Philip married in 1947. Three months after that, Alexandra wed Prince Alexander von Furstenberg, son of Diane von Furstenberg and her husband, Prince Egon, grandson of Giovanni Agnelli, the founder of Fiat.

PHOTOGRAPHS: © INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY/DAVID SEIDNER ARCHIVE, TIM GRAHAM/GETTY IMAGES, WIREIMAGE



Left, the wedding of Marie-Chantal Miller and Crown Prince Pavlos of Greece, London, 1995





Talita and her brother Tassilo, 2005



Egon and Diane von Furstenberg, 1972. *Top*, Talita, Alex and Alexandra von Furstenberg, 2001. *Below*, Talita, Diane and Alexandra, 2014



Pia, *far left*, Marie-Chantal, *standing*, and friends at Cap Ferrat, 1991



But none of the Miller girls was ever work-shy. Pia, now 48, divorced from Christopher and based in London, is a documentary-maker and a spokeswoman for make-up brand Sephora; Marie-Chantal, 46, who also lives in London, runs her eponymous children's-clothes superbrand. Launched in 2000, the company now has four stand-alone boutiques and the label is stocked in 60 luxury stores around the world. Alex, meanwhile, worked for DVF for a decade before launching an ultramodern, acrylic furniture line based in LA, where she lives. Now 42, she is also divorced but recently married the dashing American architect Dax Miller, so she may yet, coincidentally, 'revert' to her maiden name.

Between them, the Miller sisters have had 11 children – seven of whom are princes or princesses. Aged between seven and 22, they're the glossy heirs to the 'Three Graces', as Pia, Marie-Chantal and Alex were often described. The baton's being handed over to Talita and her cousins. Let's hope they run with it.

...and then there's just the small matter of the VON FURSTENBERGS

'Fear is not an option.' That's the motto Diane (pronounced 'Dee-ahn', please) lives by – her mother, Liliane Nahmias, was a Holocaust survivor. Born Diane Halfin in Brussels, she studied economics at the University of Geneva, where, at 18, she met and later married Egon, the son of a German prince and an heiress to the Fiat fortune.

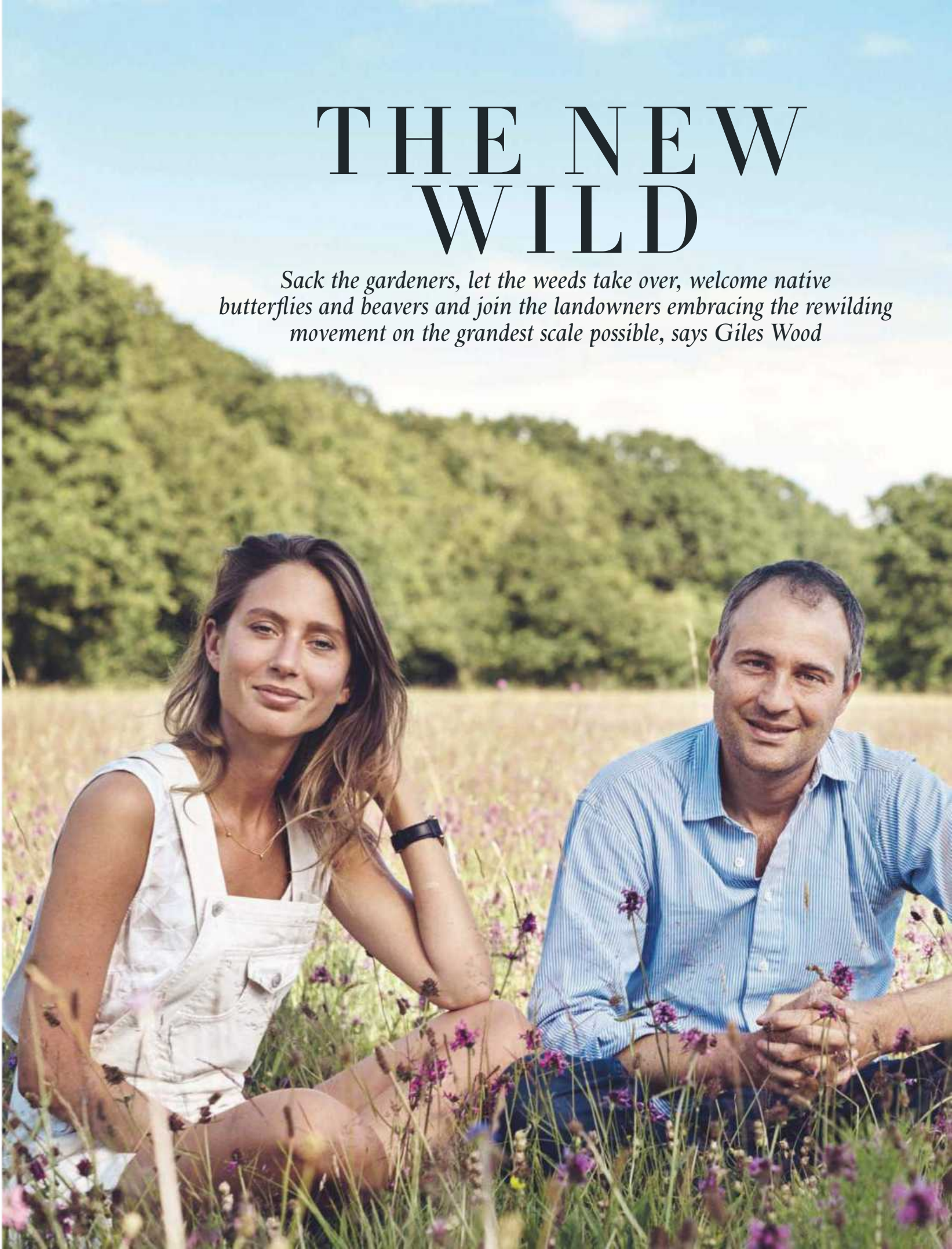
Diane and Egon moved to New York in 1969 and – BOOM! – DVF, fashion superstar and Warhol muse, emerged. The marriage didn't last but the name has – as has the iconic jersey wrap dress she created in 1974. In 2001, Diane married media mogul Barry Diller, and last year *Forbes* anointed the then 68-year-old the 68th most powerful woman in the world.

As for the von Furstenberg progeny – 45-year-old Prince Alexander (Talita's dad) is a wildly handsome and successful investment banker. As a teen, he lived in the Carlyle Hotel, two floors below the Millers – yes, that's where he met Alexandra. He is now engaged to a designer, Ali Kay, who gave birth to their son Leon in 2012.

Princess Tatiana, 44, is a rock singer turned filmmaker – in 2009, she wrote and directed *Tanner Hall*, a film, starring Rooney Mara, about a girls' boarding school, inspired in part by her English education at Cranborne Chase. She has a 15-year-old daughter, Antonia, with her husband, actor Russell Steinberg, and is utterly at home on all continents. As all good VFs seem to be. □

THE NEW WILD

Sack the gardeners, let the weeds take over, welcome native butterflies and beavers and join the landowners embracing the rewilding movement on the grandest scale possible, says Giles Wood





JEMIMA & BEN GOLDSMITH IN A WILDFLOWER MEADOW ON THEIR SOMERSET ESTATE

Photographed by BEN QUINTON

Good news for all you cash-strapped, large-scale landowners: you no longer need try to keep up with the Capability Browns. Because highly maintained landscapes requiring expensive fleets of gardeners have no place in an era threatened by the 'sixth mass extinction' – the ongoing man-made decimation of species that is happening right now, at an estimated rate of 100,000 a year. Even farming sustainably and organically isn't enough – rewilding is the really green thing to do. In short, the restoration of an area of land to its natural, uncultivated state.

I, for one, am doing my bit. When, 25 years ago, I inherited one acre of chemically farmed wheatfield in Wiltshire, to get rid of the pall of monoculture I planted as many different species of native trees as would fit. I stopped cutting the grass and digging up nettles and docks, which created an explosion of insects and butterflies. I planted teasels that have attracted goldfinches and, because I left my docks to flourish, bullfinches came in search of the seeds. Bats followed, attracted by the insects and the fruit trees, and very soon I had my own mini-nature reserve.

I'm at pains to explain to my neighbours that this is not neglect but ecological restoration. The tide is moving my way – even the local council has stopped pointlessly mowing the verges in May rather than July – although when new local Lord Mandelson popped in for tea, he was rather surprised to be told that the clearing in a bushy thicket wherein the tea was served was not the result of my failure to maintain order but of my providing habitat for overwintering invertebrates. It's a small thing but my own.

And I am not alone. A new breed of self-styled eco-crat is leading the rewilding movement, touring refugia in Europe to see what's what and creating eco-corners. Wood bison, musk oxen, yaks and reindeer have been reintroduced in Siberia. In Sweden, wolves and bears are back. Reclusive Danish clothing billionaire and rewilding behemoth Anders Holch Povlsen has bought land in the Carpathians as a wild sanctuary for wolves, bears and lynx. He is also the second-largest private landowner in Scotland, snaffling up Highland estates to create an uninterrupted wilderness – though there are no wolves as yet.

And far from Siberia, in the overcrowded English shires, there are Ben Goldsmith and Sir Charles Burrell, both passionate advocates for the rewilding movement, each putting his manor where his mouth is. Now that's really wild... ▷







CLOCKWISE, *FROM TOP LEFT*, BEN WITH HIS WHITE PARK CATTLE; A WILD ORCHID & BUTTERFLY; BEN'S DAUGHTER IRIS, *RIGHT*, HIS SON ISAAC & IRIS'S FRIEND ANNABELLE OAKLEY

BORN TO REWILD

Those green Goldsmith genes are in action in Somerset

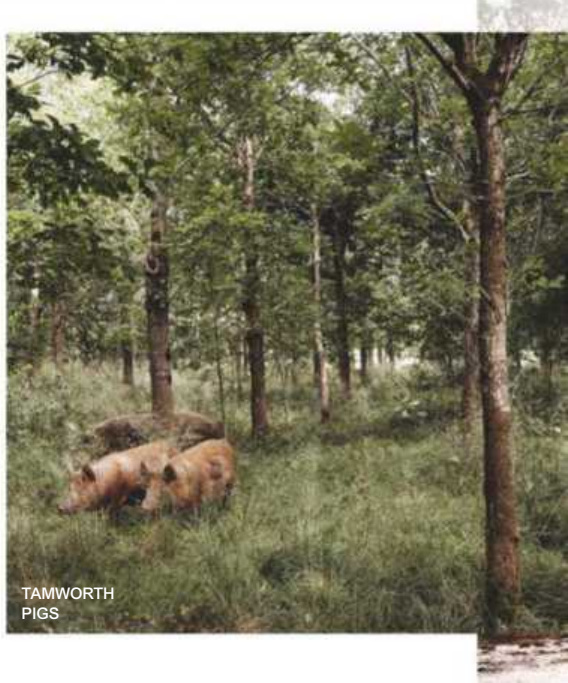
Ben Goldsmith, 34, has the hawkish eyes of his late billionaire father, Sir James, and the same ability to talk fluently at 100 words a minute. The eco-activist, philanthropist and financier at the sustainability-focused investment group WHEB has now added to his rota of day jobs by co-founding Rewilding Britain with *Guardian* columnist George Monbiot.

It's an unlikely alliance. The two may be poles apart politically but are united on rewilding. Ben much admires Monbiot's provocative book *Feral*, which challenges, among other landowning nostrums, the eco-friendly status of Scottish sporting estates, attacking grouse moors in particular – he argues that they suppress other forms of wildlife and biodiversity for the niche market of the privileged few. Monbiot also describes EU-subsidised hill farms in places like Wales as 'sheep-wrecked' landscapes, overgrazing having hampered biodiversity. Rewilding Britain aims to see 'at least one million hectares of core land areas and 30 percent of territorial waters supporting natural processes and keystone species'. 'Keystone species' play a critical role in maintaining the structure of an ecological community's 'dynamic interaction' – and include beavers and bees, as well as wolves and bears. Although, as Scots eco-crat Hugh Raven observes of grizzly bears, 'I don't think anyone wants to bring those American beasties over here.'

Ben's personal rewilding project comprises the 200 acres around the child-, dog- and entourage-friendly, stone-built Somerset farmhouse he bought with his first wife, Kate Rothschild, but now shares with his 28-year-old second wife, Jemima, 'a brilliant, really hard-working chef'. His pace is athletic as he leads me around the land. This is a working farm but the vision is of a wildflower-rich pasture inside a doughnut of woodland, much of it recently planted, with newly dredged ponds, complete with gently sloping edges for marginal plants to colonise. The previous owners of this Somerset patch, Polly Devlin and Andy Garnett (parents of Bay, Rose and Daisy), rescued one of the last surviving wildflower meadows in England, wherein thousands of orchids flourish alongside mosses, horsetails, grasses and rushes, and sedge and ragged robin reign supreme. It can take 100 years to create a wildflower meadow – 97 per cent of the UK's have been grubbed up since the Forties.

So while a low density of sheep graze the pastures, Ben is rewilding around the edges. Or, rewilding lite. Cut branches are left in heaps, as are fallen trees, encouraging invertebrates and nesting woodpeckers. Dead wood brings life, so here it is left standing.

A friendly Tamworth sow responds to Ben's whistle and trots eagerly towards him for an affectionate pat on her flanks. The pig occupies a similar ecological niche to the wild boar: its horny hooves churn up the ground like



TAMWORTH PIGS





ABOVE, ISAAC SWIMMING WITH HIS FRIEND CLAUDIA OAKLEY. *BELOW*, A NEWLY DUG POND

nature's own rotavator, leaving it in perfect condition for the regeneration of ground flora and pioneer tree species like sallow, or hybridised willow. The hooves also pierce the frozen ground in winter; a disruption depended upon by birds for food. Ben would far prefer his land to host wild boar. He also wants lynx and beavers roaring round the shire. 'Lynx because they are natural predators of badgers and foxes – of which we have too many and currently no predators except mankind.' And beavers because they are 'a keystone species which can alter its environment by making dams, and thereby creating wetlands and ecological niches which benefit other fauna and flora'.

None of this is very popular with conventional landowners – but Ben seeks to reeducate them. Take the pine marten, for instance. 'I've introduced my neighbours to the Vincent Wildlife Trust [which runs a pine-marten recovery project] and to Henry Hoare and the National Trust. Henry Hoare has paid for a study that shows there is enough habitat here for pine martens, which haven't been in the south of England for 200 years. The idea is to bring down 20 a year from Scotland for four years and establish them in the South-West.

'Where the pine marten lives,' he continues, 'so do red squirrels – they can go further along tree branches to escape than greys. So the greys are killed and the reds flourish.'

Ben's eco-activism was first inspired by his uncle Teddy Goldsmith, whose eco-voice cried in the wilderness for many years. He was one of the first to rail against excessive consumption and the pathological nature of Western economic growth at any price. This might seem rich coming from a Goldsmith, but Ben's father Jimmy bought his own reserve in Mexico, which he left to that country. And his brother Zac, who edited *The Ecologist* for 10 years, has just been re-elected MP for Richmond with a majority of 23,000 and is in the running to be London's Mayor. Green issues are at the heart of his politics.

Ben has his eye on expanding his vision of wild England if local land comes up for sale – connectivity is the buzzword. But nothing gives him more pleasure than watching his nine-year-old son, Frankie, interacting with wild nature.

'In spring, he rescued all this frogspawn and toad spawn from the ditches where it normally doesn't survive because it gets dried out.' He beams, full of paternal pride. 'Every morning he's up at dawn photographing species and putting the photos up on his Instagram account.'

Well, rewilding – it is for the next generation, after all. ▷

THE WAY WE WERE

Sir Charles Burrell reboots nature in West Sussex

The Burrells have farmed the Knepp Estate in West Sussex for more than two centuries – farmed it right up to the studded oak doors of Knepp Castle, a John Nash-designed edifice that its chatelaine, travel-writer Isabella Tree, describes as a 'castle by name, folly by nature'. Yet their 3,500 acres of Wealden clay was unsuitable for modern intensive agriculture and proved unyielding and unprofitable. So, in 2001, Sir Charles Burrell, who trained at Cirencester and inherited the estate at 22 in 1985, played the wild card. Now Knepp is home to one of the largest privately owned rewilding projects in lowland Europe.

Charlie's inspiration was a visit to the Oostvaardersplassen, a wet- and drylands nature reserve in the Netherlands that was one of the earliest rewilding schemes (it was conceived in 1968). Back on the estate, Burrell quickly set about removing 300 miles of fencing and introducing herds of deer, Exmoor ponies, old English Longhorn cattle and Tamworth pigs to beat the place up a bit in the manner of such ancient megafauna as the auroch, a giant, horned ancestor of modern cattle, and the tarpan, the wild horse of Europe – both now extinct.

The result is a complex mosaic of habitats, ranging from water meadows to scrublands, groves and wood pasture, and including exuberant hedgerows that have formed thickets so dense and attractive to nightingales that Knepp can now boast two per cent of the country's population of the songbird. Most thrilling to Aurelians (butterfly fanciers), however, is the presence of the elusive and charismatic Purple Emperor, whose caterpillar feeds on the extensive stands of sallow. And thanks to the seeds of fumitory, classed as a weed, Knepp is now home to 11 pairs of turtle doves (they love the stuff). No wonder the National Trust and numerous wildlife organisations are knocking on Knepp's door for advice.

It is the willowy Isabella who accompanies me and eight eco-punters on a three-hour safari of rewilded Knepp – her husband Charlie is also the sponsor of Remarkable Trees of Romania, a project to find and record the oldest, biggest and most special trees there, and is away in Transylvania with the Prince of Wales on the day I visit. We trundle over the terrain in an Austrian pinzgauer and see many wild and wonderful things.

But what would Burrell's ancestors think to see their hard-won arable fields turned into savannah, erupting with dog-rose bramble and thorn? Surely they'd approve of the process of succession – vegetative rather than aristocratic – where benign neglect allows the biological community to evolve its own structure over time. In a nutshell, the oak tree will come in after the plebeian scrub, which grows first and creates a 'nursery' within which the oak saplings can be protected until strong enough to thrive alone. Hedges, which after all are only linear woods, lose their contours once you stop cutting them, and start to billow, meeting the vegetation halfway. Each field becomes indistinguishable from the wilderness around it. But, explains Isabella, at Knepp it is not the intention to seek a closed canopy or impenetrable woodland. And those browsing 'wild' animals are there to replace the megafauna that would, in ancient times, have kept the canopy open. Was that a herd of Thomson's gazelle that shot across our view? No, fallow deer, their bucking backsides flashing as they vanished, rocking horse-like, into the greenery.

The dragonflies – including the excitingly rare Scarce Chasers – were also out in force. Underneath a metal panel in long grass, grass snakes and slow worms basked in the trapped heat. We too were warm, and the safari came to a halt. And while we ate Knepp-made carrot cake and drank elderflower cordial, we admired the lake from a viewing platform attached to a veteran oak.

Environmental stewardship grants have helped to make the enterprise feasible. Releasing 450,000 square feet of former farm buildings, 100,000 square feet of which have been converted into rentable office space, and selling 35 tonnes of organic, pasture-fed, free-roaming beef, pork and venison a year have made it profitable.

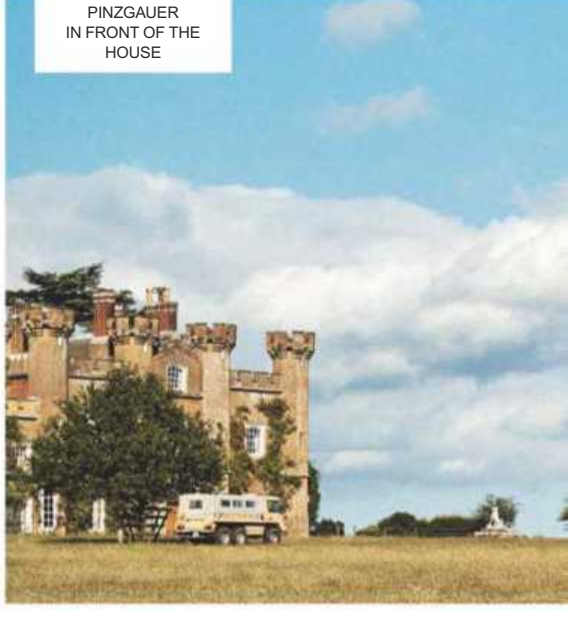
As have the tourist attractions: the farm shop selling Knepp Wildland honey and organic eggs; the glamping, with shepherds' huts, a yurt, teepees and bell tents, and all the thrill of safari showers and firepits and outdoor dining to the trill of nightingales.

But most exciting are the various 'safaris' (including the dramatic deer-rut safaris in autumn). 'The analogy to safaris is not far-fetched,' says Isabella. 'The only thing that is missing is fear. There are no apex predators. But I guess Charlie wouldn't say no to a lynx if it came his way.' □

Safaris, from £25 a person; luxury camping, from £140 for two nights for two (kneppsafaris.co.uk).







ABOVE, LADY & SIR CHARLES BURRELL. *BELOW*, THE BURRELLS' PINZGAUER IN FRONT OF THE HOUSE



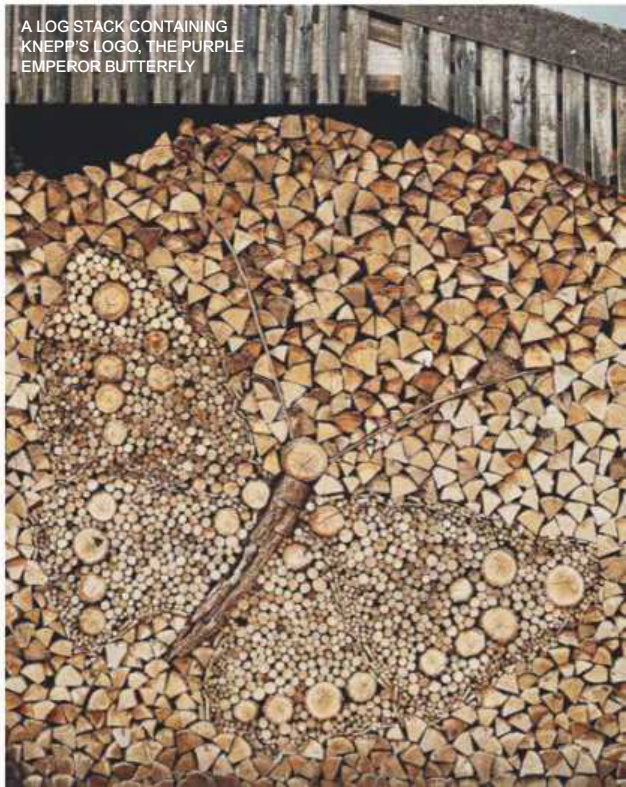




ABOVE, WETLAND &, *RIGHT*, EXMOOR PONIES AT KNEPP







A LOG STACK CONTAINING KNEPP'S LOGO, THE PURPLE EMPEROR BUTTERFLY

WHO NEEDS A LIMO?

Not us, not any more. Richard Godwin talks to Dave Clark about Uber's plans for total world domination

It is a beautiful morning in Mayfair on one of those rare London days when everything seems blissfully easy. I am sitting in the private members's club, Little House, across from Dave Clark, Princess Beatrice's boyfriend of seven years and the new head of external affairs at Uber, the smartphone taxi service. He is trying to convey the excitement that comes with landing a job at the world's fastest-growing company.

'Let me give you an idea of scale,' he says, speaking so quickly I wonder if he fears his thoughts themselves will be outpaced. 'When Uber started in San Francisco in 2010, the city's taxi and limo market was said to be worth $150m (£96m). Now we're making $700m (£450m) there a year, AND' – pause for emphasis – 'the old taxis and limousines are still operating. We didn't take away their business, we created a whole new market! And right now, there is no market we go into where we are not successful.'

He's not exaggerating – Uber is one of those companies where the actual statistics are more impressive than the superlatives. Still technically a start-up, it was recently valued at $40bn (£26bn) and will probably be worth more by the time you read this. As it stands, there are tiny Uber cars moving around smartphone screens in more than 300 cities, including Lagos, Mumbai, Moscow and Rio de Janeiro. Even Slough. The firm's CEO, Travis Kalanick, 38 – himself valued at $5.4bn (around £3.4bn) – is on target to reach his goal of 500 'Uberable' cities by 2017.

The company recently passed one million registered Uber drivers worldwide (controversially, the company sees them not as employees but as 'customers' who use the app as a platform, just like the riders). And it's not simply the taxi business that the firm is disrupting. UberEats is an experimental food-delivery service that now operates in four North American cities and Barcelona. The company is experimenting with UberPool, which will allow users to share rides and will apparently be cheaper than a London bus when it launches in the UK later this year. Then there was UberJet, a trial jet-on-demand service – a great success at the 2014 Cannes Film Festival. 'It's actually pretty straightforward from a technical point of view,' as Clark tells me. 'Everyone wants a solution to jets, right?'

In many ways, Clark – dressed in a navy suit with open-necked white shirt and Ray-Bans – typifies the company's recruitment policy even if, at 31, he's a little old by tech standards. Effortlessly international in his outlook, he grew up between New York and London (and speaks with a mid-Atlantic accent that used to mean he was ripped off by taxis in both cities until Uber came along). Clark now divides his time between Uber's HQ in San Francisco, its new frontiers in China, India and the Middle East, and New York. He has an impressive CV, having spent the last 10 years working on Sir Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic mission (and he has a ticket for the first commercial orbit, which means that, should he marry Princess Beatrice, he will be the first royal in space). He is supremely well-connected, hyper-ambitious and part of a generation for whom 'convenience is everything'.

Another impressive new recruit is Google's ex-head of communications, Rachel Whetstone, who recently took over from Barack Obama's former adviser David Plouffe as Uber's head of communications and public policy in the US. Those who have worked with her at Google (which remains a major investor in Uber) pay tribute to an 'inspiring' and 'super-smart' woman, but it's her political connections that make her a particularly canny hire. She's the Benenden-and-Bristol-educated wife of the former Conservative strategist Steve Hilton, and was godmother to David Cameron's late son, Ivan. 'Rachel is the most amazing person and she knows everyone,' says a former employee. 'She can pick up the phone to Cameron and pretty much any prime minister or president in the world. That's a great way for Uber to lobby.' And as Uber moves into the next phase of its business plan, it's these sorts of connections that will prove crucial to realising Kalanick's ambition to make 'transport as reliable as running water'.

While other Silicon Valley companies promote a jaunty and inclusive sort of image, Uber has always gone after a more elite clientele – 'everyone's private driver', as the tagline goes – and adopted a more combative stance. Clark tells me he actually goes back 'a long way' with Kalanick, having spent a year in Silicon Valley in 2005 after he graduated from Bowdoin College, Massachusetts. He describes Kalanick as the most 'driven and determined' person he's ever met. (Kalanick holds all his meetings while walking, apparently, and, according to his health app, paces 40 miles around the San Francisco HQ each week.)

'What's special about Travis is that he not only sees ahead into the future, he sees ahead and round the corner. He anticipates the problem before anyone else and knows what it takes to solve it.' The LA-born and bred Kalanick – his father a civil engineer, his brother a firefighter – dropped out of UCLA in 1998 to work on Scour – a multimedia search engine and peer-to-peer file-sharing service. The company later filed for bankruptcy to protect itself from a copyright infringement lawsuit that left Kalanick with a taste of disappointment – and a point to prove – by the time he co-founded Uber with his business partner Garrett Camp in 2009.

As with his first cars in San Francisco, Kalanick's entry into the London market in 2012 came through the premium service, UberExec: a small fleet of luxury cars complete with tinted windows, impeccably turned-out drivers and complimentary bottles of water. Clark tells me that he and Kalanick first discussed Uber's entry into London in Little House; and although he was working at Virgin Galactic at the time, it was Clark who hosted the launch party.

Meanwhile, those UberExecs soon became to the smart young party set what the brougham was to the 18th-century dandy and the black cab to the Eighties Sloane. The Uber revolution suddenly made hailing a taxi and scrabbling around for a tip seem an awful hassle. Now, all it took was a few swipes and you could get from A to B (Annabel's to Bodo's) in minutes for about £7. It cannot be pure coincidence that the company's first experiments with an English rural service take in Windsor, Slough and Maidenhead, incorporating Eton and Henley-on-Thames – a green pin dropped right in the royal heartlands. CONTINUED ON PAGE 223

PHOTOGRAPHS: REUTERS, XPOSURE, ALAN DAVIDSON, PRESS ASSOCIATION, GETTY IMAGES, EYEVINE



Riot police at the recent anti-Uber protests in Paris





Above, Boris Johnson. *Right*, Uber communications chief Rachel Whetstone and her husband Steve Hilton



Princess Beatrice and Dave Clark. *Below right*, Uber CEO Travis Kalanick. *Below left*, London taxis opposing Uber blockade Whitehall





Photographed by CHANTELLE DOSSER

Styled by DEEP KAILEY

Get your coat

Because you're looking super-hot in those swanky suits, Tallulah Harlech





THIS PAGE, VIRGIN-WOOL JACKET, £950; VIRGIN-WOOL TROUSERS, £545, BOTH BY **PAUL SMITH**. CASHMERE JUMPER, £645, BY **MICHAEL KORS**. EARRINGS, TALLULAH'S OWN

OPPOSITE PAGE, WOOL JACKET, £1,330; WOOL TROUSERS, £490, BOTH BY **ERMANNO SCERVINO**. WOOL COAT, £1,650, BY **PORTS 1961**. LEATHER HEELS, £530, BY **JIL SANDER**



JERSEY JACKET, £1,355; SILK SHIRT, £480; MOHAIR T-SHIRT (JUST SEEN), £340; JERSEY TROUSERS, £515, ALL BY **PRADA**. LEATHER SHOES, £715, BY **CALVIN KLEIN COLLECTION.** BRACELET, TALLULAH'S OWN



WOOL JACKET, £2,190; WOOL TROUSERS, £725, BOTH BY **CHLOE**. LEATHER SHOES (JUST SEEN), £550, BY **JIL SANDER**



LUREX-KNIT BODYSUIT, £315; LEATHER TROUSERS, £2,520, BOTH BY **CALVIN KLEIN COLLECTION**. LEATHER SHOES, £279, BY **BY MALENE BIRGER**



COTTON & SATIN SMOKING, POA, BY **BOSS**. LEATHER HEELS, £425, BY **CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN**



STRETCH-SATIN JUMPSUIT, £1,230; COTTON BODY-SHIRT, £580, BOTH BY **DONNA KARAN NEW YORK**. LEATHER SLIPPERS, £650, BY **GUCCI**



WOOL BLAZER; WOOL TROUSERS, BOTH POA; VELVET JACKET, £1,395, ALL BY **HILLIER BARTLEY**. LEATHER BOOTS, £990, BY **LOEWE**

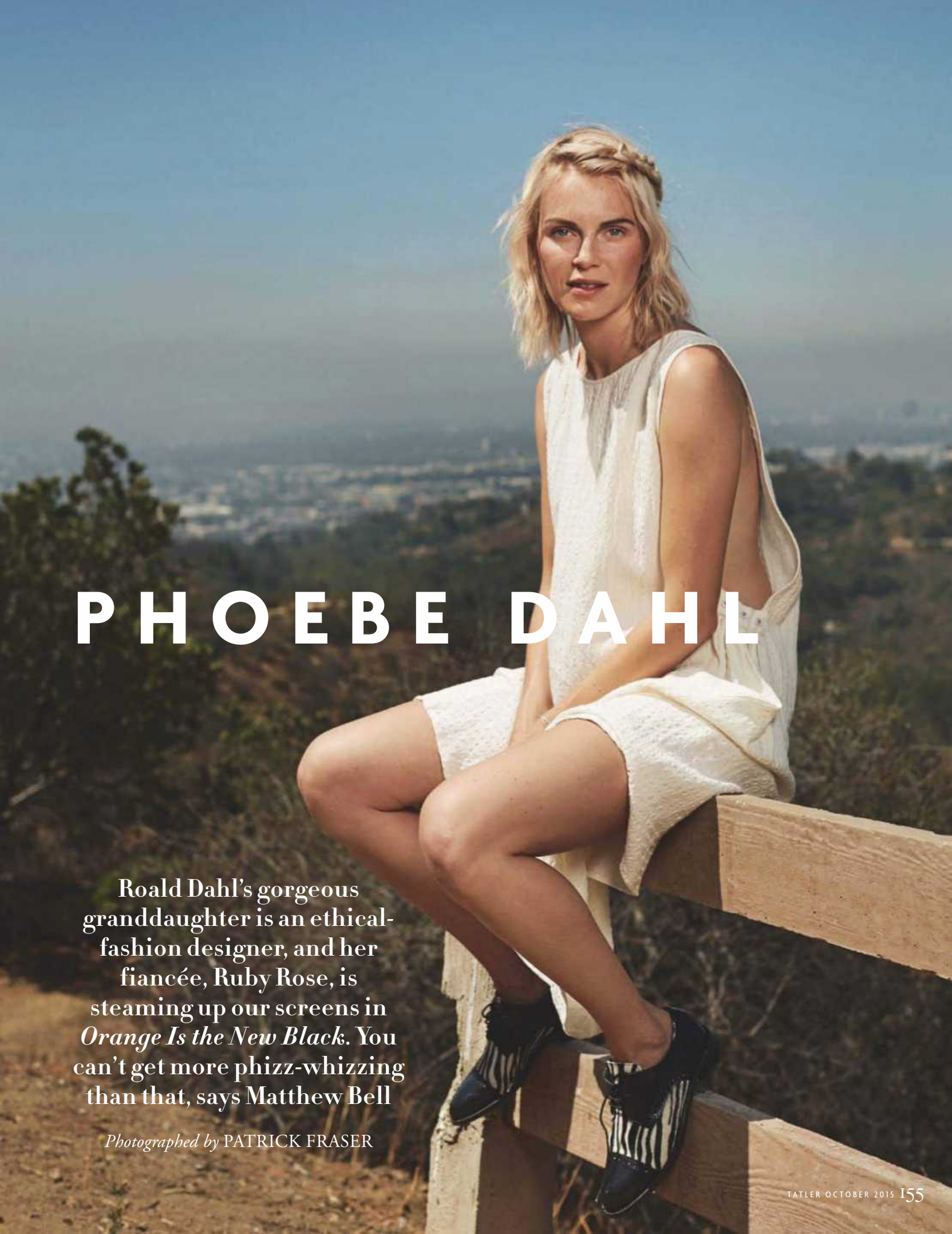
FOR STOCKISTS, SEE ADDRESS BOOK. HAIR BY PANOS AT CLM HAIR & MAKE-UP, USING UNITE. MAKE-UP BY JUNE SAWYER AT AGENCE AURELIEN PARIS. PRODUCTION, ELLE KORHALILLER. FASHION ASSISTANT, JESSICA RADCLIFFE-BROWN



Phoebe Dahl,
Los Angeles

THE FANTASTIC

CLOTHES BY FAIRCLOTH & SUPPLY (FAIRCLOTHSUPPLY.COM), SHOES, PHOEBE'S OWN.
HAIR & MAKE-UP BY ANDRE SARMIENTO & BOBBY ELIOT AT TMG-LA.COM, USING SUQQU & ORIBE



PHOEBE DAHL

Roald Dahl's gorgeous granddaughter is an ethical-fashion designer, and her fiancée, Ruby Rose, is steaming up our screens in *Orange Is the New Black*. You can't get more phizz-whizzing than that, says Matthew Bell

Photographed by PATRICK FRASER

PHOEBE 4 RUBY

Never a Dahl moment...



PHOEBE DAHL & RUBY ROSE...



...WITH *AMIGAS* IN MADRID



...OUT OF THEIR TREE



...HANGING TOUGH



...GETTING ALONG SWIMMINGLY

He may have had Norwegian parents and a Welsh upbringing, but Roald Dahl was one of the best Englishmen ever. He just was. His stories captured a world of gobstoppers and pheasant-poaching and gypsy caravans that could only exist here but are adored the world over. Now America has fallen in love with another Dahl – Roald's 26-year-old granddaughter, Phoebe. She is blonde, beautiful, ethical and one half of the hottest couple in the world right now.

For the record, Phoebe Dahl is not married. Not yet, despite what you might have read online – those breathless reports about 'commitment ceremonies' with her fiancée in Madrid. It's a technicality, mind you, because not since Richard Burton clapped eyes on Elizabeth Taylor has Hollywood witnessed such a roof-blowing love affair as the one between Phoebe Dahl and Ruby Rose, the Australian-born actress/model/DJ. Ruby plays Stella in *Orange Is the New Black*, the hit US prison drama, which she joined in season three as the tattooed beauty who seduces Piper Chapman (and all the viewers). Phoebe, meanwhile, runs her own fashion label, Faircloth & Supply.

'A friend brought Ruby along and we had an immediate connection.' Which was awkward, as Phoebe was dating another girl

They met, in the best possible way, by chance last year – introduced by a mutual friend at a party Phoebe was giving at her house. 'A friend brought Ruby along and we had an immediate connection,' she says. Which was awkward, as Phoebe was dating another girl. But she finished with her that night and a couple of days later made her feelings clear by breaking into Ruby's house at 6am with a bunch of flowers.

It was a lightning romance, and today they live together in LA, where they're the hub of a hot young lesbian power network. Their lives are like a series of *The L Word*, the lesbian TV drama set in West Hollywood. Or rather, it pre-empted their whole scene – a fun and highly social gang of high-achieving actresses all hanging out (and sometimes sleeping) with each other.

Marriage – and babies – are on the cards, just not right now. 'We have put it on the back burner for a little bit,' says Phoebe down the line from Los Angeles in a surprisingly American drawl. Despite being a Dahl, she feels most at home in America, where she was brought up and has spent most of her adult life, apart from periods in London and Amsterdam.

But back to the future – when is the wedding? 'We talked about it and there's no rush,' she says. 'We're very happy with where we are right now, and being engaged, and actually enjoying being engaged.' It was Ruby who popped the question, just as Phoebe was making a trip to Nepal. They are thinking next summer might be the moment. 'We want to wait until we actually have some time to focus on it and have some fun with it.'

She is sitting in the garden of her LA home when we speak, a pretty little house overlooking Silver Lake Reservoir. It's hot but she's sipping a cup of tea – PG Tips, no less. Heavy night, was it? 'No!' she laughs. 'Those days are over, unfortunately. I used to be wild when I was younger, but now my social life is all about dinner parties.' Her other great love is dogs – she has two rescue ones. Loving animals is a very Dahl thing – Roald was mad about them. In fact, he lost his faith because of it. When the Archbishop of Canterbury told him that his daughter was in paradise – Olivia Dahl died in 1962, aged seven, of measles encephalitis – but that her beloved dog Rowley wouldn't be joining her, he stopped believing, as he couldn't see why humans would get preferential treatment over animals. Phoebe's dogs are a partially disabled black chihuahua, Chance, who has to bounce around on her hind legs but is 'quite happy'. The other, Ru, is a terrier cross, named after Ruby when she used to have blonde hair. 'Now she looks more like me.'

Although children are a long way off, they are one of Phoebe's main preoccupations. The main point of Faircloth & Supply – the women's fashion label she set up that majors in simple and fresh practical designs in linen and cotton – is to raise funds for

PHOTOGRAPHS: REX FEATURES, RUBYROSE/INSTAGRAM, FAIRCLOTH_SUPPLY/INSTAGRAM

Nepalese girls. For each garment sold, a school uniform is donated to a girl in Nepal. 'I was two when my grandfather died, but we have this love of children in common,' she says. Her favourite of his books is *The Twits*, which she is currently re-reading, and she plans to go back to all his works, as she believes they can be read by adults as much as they can by children.

It's remarkable how effectively the Dahl name is kept going, despite the fact that Roald Dahl had only one son, Theo, and four daughters. Best known over here is his granddaughter Sophie Dahl, the model, cook and author, and wife of the jazz singer Jamie Cullum, with whom she has two daughters, Lyra, four, and Margot, two. Then there's Sophie's mother Tessa, the Roedean-schooled novelist, actress and writer, who is a redoubtable figure in the Oxfordshire social scene. Her eldest son, Luke Kelly, has taken up the family profession, penning his own children's book, and also oversees the Dahl estate. Tall, bearded and with a penchant for tweed, he is currently dating Lady Mary Wellesley, daughter of the Duke of Wellington.

Phoebe's mother is Lucy, the youngest of Roald Dahl's daughters. Lucy was in her early 20s when she met Phoebe's father, Michael Faircloth, on holiday. He was a handsome water-ski instructor from Florida; they married, and Phoebe was born in 1988, and her sister Chloe in 1990. The marriage didn't last, and they divorced when Phoebe was three. Lucy and her daughters went to Martha's Vineyard to live with her mother, the actress Patricia Neal, who died in 2010, and then to Los Angeles, where Lucy became a screenwriter.

In 2002, she married John LaViolette, an entertainment lawyer, who has five children from a previous marriage, and Phoebe and Chloe spent their teenage years in a big house in Hancock Park, a smart suburb of Los Angeles. As you would expect of a celebrity kid growing up in LA – she went to school with Bruce Willis's kids – there were wild times, but she got it out of her system early on. 'I hardly even drink now,' she says. She studied at the San Francisco Fashion Institute and London College of Fashion, though she had already taught herself how to sew aged 13.

As she and Chloe were effectively raised by their mother and grandmother and scarcely knew their father, it made sense to change their names to Dahl. But in a sense, Phoebe is a Dahl in little more than name. That is, she never really knew her grandfather, and has spent most of her life in Los Angeles, a long way from Great Missenden and Gipsy House, the hub of all British Dahl activity.

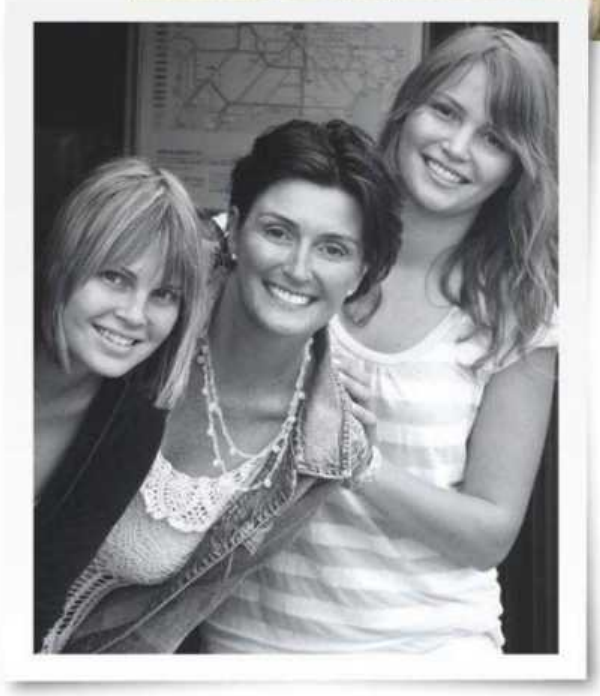
But the American Dahls are a tight-knit bunch, and they all support each other in their various endeavours. Chloe, who also lives in LA, has followed her mother into filmmaking, and recently opened a lobster-roll shack. She too is gay, as is their aunt Ophelia Dahl, who lives in Boston.

'It's such a blessing to have them around,' says Phoebe. 'They have become Ruby's family too, because her family are a long way away in Australia.' Phoebe describes her mother and aunt as strong, independent-minded women. For years she didn't want anything to do with her father, but there has recently been a reconciliation. She took a deep breath and went to see him in Miami just two weeks before we speak. 'It was a big step for us,' she says. 'We didn't get on for years, but life's too short. We've been working on having a better relationship.' She describes him as 'a laidback, beach-bum kind of guy. He's just very happy taking photos and surfing and having a life out on the ocean. I definitely get my love for the ocean and desire for adventure from him.'

It's ironic that she changed her name to Dahl when her original surname, Faircloth, couldn't be more perfect for an ethical clothing brand. It's as if nominative determinism were at play. Amazingly, she almost didn't name her brand Faircloth. 'I was thinking of lots of names and everyone kept saying it had to be Faircloth,' she says. 'In the end, I gave in.' Of course she did. She had to. But perhaps it's just as well she became a Dahl. An ethical-clothes retailer called Phoebe Faircloth? Sounds like a character from a Roald Dahl story. □



Patricia Neal and Roald Dahl with their children, *from left*, Theo, Tessa and Olivia, 1962. *Below left*, Phoebe, Lucy and Chloe Dahl, 2006





A 1930 portrait of Lee Miller by her lover Man Ray. *Opposite page*, Miller in the bathtub in Hitler's Munich apartment, 1945



LOVERS & DEMONS

Model, muse, photographer and war reporter – Lee Miller started out in upper-class New York, seduced surrealist Paris, stalked the battlefields of Europe and ended her days in the Sussex countryside, ravaged by all that she had seen. David Jenkins investigates a life of passion and tragedy

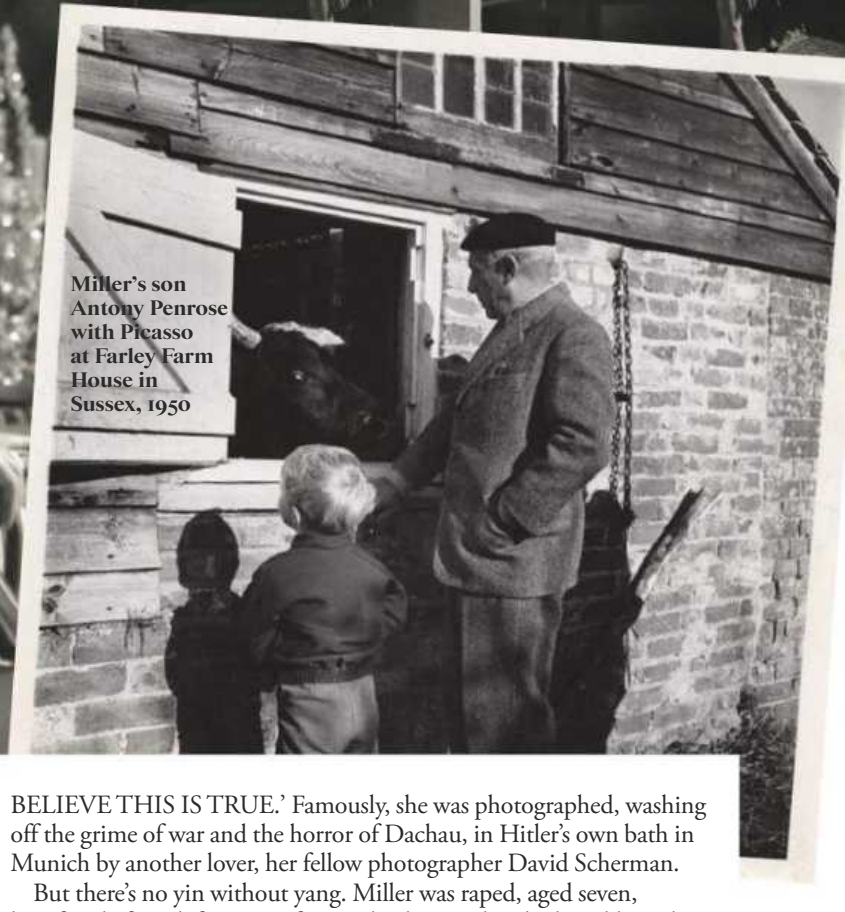
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A 1928 portrait of Miller by Edward Steichen



A stereoscopic study of Miller, aged 21, by her father, Theodore Miller, 1928



Miller's son Antony Penrose with Picasso at Farley Farm House in Sussex, 1950

It's no great surprise that Nicole Kidman wanted to play Lee Miller on screen. Glamour draped the American-born photographer like a Schiaparelli ballgown, though despair lingered in the shadows. And Miller's was the epitome of a life less ordinary.

Miller was once described as the most beautiful woman in the world; in pre-Second World War Paris – she was born in 1907 – a much-admired champagne glass was moulded from one of her breasts. She lived with the great surrealist Man Ray and drove him to the brink of suicide; she took lovers with abandon, Picasso among them. Yet when, aged 40, she was preparing to give birth to her only child, Antony Penrose, she wrote that, should she die, she knew that 'if I had it [my life] over again, I'd be even more free with my ideas, my body and my affection'. She took exquisite photographs of the Egyptian desert and highly accomplished portraits of the rich and famous but found her true métier as a war photographer. As the only photographer in Saint-Malo, she chronicled the danger and destruction of the liberation of the city. She was one of the first to enter Buchenwald and Dachau, horrific images of which she sent to her editors at British *Vogue* – yes, *Vogue*. The cable that accompanied them bore the words 'I IMPLORE YOU TO BELIEVE THIS IS TRUE.' Famously, she was photographed, washing off the grime of war and the horror of Dachau, in Hitler's own bath in Munich by another lover, her fellow photographer David Scherman.

But there's no yin without yang. Miller was raped, aged seven, by a family friend; for years afterwards, she was douched weekly with dichloride of mercury to rid her of VD. Her father, a freethinker, atheist and affluent engineer, took nude photographs of Miller from the age of nine until as late as 25, when, reports Carolyn Burke, Miller's biographer, he shot one of Lee and a model 'in a position that stops just short of lesbian sex'. In not all of them does she look happy. A suitor dived off a rowing boat, perhaps to impress her; he drowned.

Even her modelling career ended on a sour note, though it began with éclat: stepping thoughtlessly onto a Manhattan street at the age of 19, she would have been run down had not a besuited stranger plucked her to safety. The stranger was Condé Nast, founder of *Vogue*, and he made her a star model, shot by Steichen, courted by Charlie Chaplin. 'I was terribly, terribly pretty,' she said. 'I looked like an angel, but I was a fiend inside.' Then a Steichen photograph, taken in Nast's apartment, was used for a Kotex advertisement in 1928. Miller was appalled – but she'd signed the release form. Two months later, she sailed for Paris and the surrealists. She sought out Man Ray and declared she was his new student. Shaken by her effrontery, he said he was leaving the next day for Biarritz. 'So am I,' she replied and soon established herself as a worthy successor to his previous mistress, Kiki de Montparnasse.

They worked together too. And she was not just a muse – her photographs were good and she played her part in perfecting



'Picnic', Miller's 1937 homage to Manet: *from left*, Nusch & Paul Eluard, Roland Penrose, Man Ray & model Ady Fidelin

'solarisation', the technique in which images are reversed in tone, with light appearing as dark and dark as light. Ray was not the only person to recognise her allure. Cocteau cast her in his film *The Blood of a Poet*; a rich Egyptian, Aziz Eloui Bey, fell for her. She quit Paris in 1932, set up a studio in New York till 1934 and then left America for marriage and Egypt. Both bored her, and she took scores of lovers, persuading her husband she needed 'bachelor' escapes to Europe. On one *mouvementé* trip, she made her famous homage to Manet's *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* – a photograph in which three of her lovers (Roland Penrose, Man Ray and Paul Eluard) sprawl on the grass, eating with their women, both of whom are topless. It is the essence of erotically charged bohemianism.

The war was different. By then she had abandoned Bey and was living with Roland Penrose, a surrealist artist and collector who later co-founded the Institute of Contemporary Arts. One night during the Blitz, she joined Penrose as he did his duty as an air-raid warden. As her son, Antony Penrose, records in *The Lives of Lee Miller*: 'During a particularly ferocious moment, as spent ammunition clattered around them, Lee grabbed Roland's arm and spun him round to face her. Eyes blazing with ecstasy, she gasped, "Oh darling, aren't you excited?"'

'I looked like an angel, but I was a fiend inside'

She needed to record her response to that excitement, and had been taken on by '*Brogue*', as British *Vogue* was known within Condé Nast – it was the magazine's telex address. According to Hilary Roberts, author of *Lee Miller: A Woman's War* and curator of the Imperial War Museum's exhibition of the same name, Miller had 'a unique eye for fashion, art and the realities of war, and she brought them all together in a highly personal synthesis'. For *Vogue*, she shot features on factory clothes with, the copy ran, 'a tough chic of their own'; 'the after-dark drama of the work of the women's services' – women manning anti-aircraft batteries, WAAFs dealing with barrage balloons, Wrens hard at work; portraits of Margot Fonteyn and James Mason; and much, much more. It was important work. The Ministry of Information recognised how crucial was women's role in the war effort; what was known as 'the Ministry of All the Talents' needed *Vogue*'s contribution.

But, says Roberts, for Miller, 'war was surreal, and her photography [of the Blitz and its effects] in 1940 was certainly an attempt to show war as a surrealist event'. In Miller's book, *Grim Glory*, shattered debris spills out of the doorway of a bomb-pounded Nonconformist chapel; a fallen statue of a classical nude, its throat bisected by an iron bar and its breast crushed by a brick, is titled 'Revenge on Culture'. Even criticism was surreal: US *Vogue*'s editor, Edna Woolman Chase, wrote a sniffy memo, criticising the *Brogue* staff (whose offices had been bombed) for dyeing their legs and pencilling lines up the back of their calves ▷

PHOTOGRAPHS: EDWARD STEICHEN/CONDE NAST ARCHIVES.
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◁ to 'simulate stockings', as Miller wrote. So 'I sent a cable: WE HAVE NO RATION COUPONS AND NO NYLON STOCKINGS ANYWAY. The next week every member of the staff was sent three pairs.' Her lover – she and Penrose maintained a ménage à trois – and photojournalistic mentor, *Life* magazine's David Scherman, would probably have appreciated that.

Miller was, Roberts suggests, 'caught up with the excitement. But there was a price to pay. She didn't know what she was getting into when she went to Europe.' Go she certainly did, as *Vogue*'s war correspondent – Miller had used her American citizenship to wangle accreditation to the US Army; she had her uniform tailored on Savile Row. Her first assignment was to the 44th Evacuation Hospital, near Omaha Beach. She wrote, brilliantly, as both Penrose and Burke demonstrate – strands of barbed wire 'looped into each other like filigree'; patients lay 'gathering strength for multiple operations on unorthodox wounds' – and she took grim yet beautiful photographs: of emergency surgery, of 'a man,' notes Burke, 'whose entire body was swathed in bandages, with slits for his eyes, nose and mouth'. *Vogue* ran her entire story and 14 photographs.

Saint-Malo followed, Miller having returned to French soil in the arms of a sailor who carried her from his ship to the beach. She was meant to be covering the town, post-liberation. In fact, it hadn't fully fallen. 'I was,' she wrote, 'the only photographer for miles around and I now owned a private war.' There were bombs bursting, machine guns chattering, napalm being used for the first time ever by American aircraft. And there was death: 'My heel ground into a dead, detached hand... I picked up the hand and hurled it across the street and ran back the way I'd come, bruising my feet... and slipping in blood.' David Scherman showed up after the battle. Lee, he wrote, looked like 'an unmade, unwashed bed'. She moved on to liberated Paris and went to see Picasso. 'This is the first Allied soldier I have seen, and it's you!' he exclaimed.

Miller put up at the Hotel Scribe, the HQ for the Allied press corps, for the next 18 months. There, she drank, made love and worked. *Vogue* made her shoot haute couture and celebrities like Marlene Dietrich and Fred Astaire. But Miller had tasted war – that was the story she had to follow. She photographed the Alsace campaign of 1945, writing that 'I'll never see acid-yellow and grey again like where shells burst near snow.' She grew to loathe the Germans; of a dead soldier she photographed near Cologne she wrote, 'This is a good German, he is dead.' Her surrealist eye in play, she added: 'Artery forceps hang from his shattered wrist.' She photographed the daughter of the burgomaster of Leipzig, dead by her own hand, and lolling on a studded chesterfield – 'she had exceptionally pretty teeth'. She photographed the horrors of Buchenwald. She recorded the meeting of American and Russian troops, and drank her share of celebratory vodka. And she went to Dachau the day after it was liberated. Her pictures are terrible in what they portray. She left, 'gulping for air and for violence'. That night, she and Scherman made free with Hitler's apartment in Munich. There she took her celebrated bath, her combat boots on the floor. At midnight that night, the news of Hitler's suicide was broadcast. On 1 May, Lee took a nap on Eva Braun's bed. A week later, the Germans surrendered.

'My heel ground into a dead detached hand'

When Lee returned to London, British *Vogue*'s managing editor, Harry Yoxall, threw a celebratory lunch and declared, 'No correspondent has displayed a greater versatility. Who else has written equally well about GIs and Picasso? Who else can swing from the Siegfried Line one week to the new hip line the next?' All very jolly, but Yoxall missed the point. The war had been exciting, but it had left its mark, and Miller found its aftermath hard to deal with – today we'd say she suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). She was not helped by the frivolity of the peacetime assignments *Vogue* gave her – a feature on 'Bachelor Entertaining', a report on the beautiful people of St Moritz, 10 ways with a headscarf. Her doctor was unsympathetic: 'We cannot keep the world permanently at war just to provide you with entertainment,' he told Miller.



Miller with Picasso in his Paris studio, August, 1945



Miller's 'Fire Masks', taken in Hampstead, 1941

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PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN © THE PENROSE COLLECTION, ENGLAND 2015. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

She had always drunk. Now she drank too much. She didn't speak about the war. 'No, she was not a talker about those days,' says Julie Lawson, who worked with Lee's new husband, Roland Penrose – they married on 3 May 1947 – at the ICA. 'She wasn't easily encouraged to talk about it. I think she wanted to suppress it. But she was always warm and friendly – I was in awe of her.' To Sue Davies, who started the Photographers' Gallery in 1971, Miller 'was clearly not interested in hunting out that part of her past' – indeed, she told Davies, in 'her wonderful, ginny voice', that she didn't have any photographs or negatives. Instead she cooked, conjuring up surrealist dishes like 'Sesame Chicken for Miró' (the painter) and 'Marshmallow-Cola Ice Cream'. 'She was very inventive,' says Lawson. 'She liked one dish she called "Goldfish" – it looked as if it was covered in gold.' Zelda Cheatle, who worked at the London Art Book Shop, saw her often: 'She'd come into the shop every day, already with a few G&Ts in her early in the morning. But fun – she had very good tales about people in the books.' And she is sure Miller wanted to forget about the war and even photography. 'I'm a cook,' Cheatle heard her tell a man asking her about surrealism. 'That's what I do. That's what I am.'

It wasn't entirely true. She photographed Picasso hundreds of times down at Farley Farm House in East Sussex, which she and Penrose bought in 1949. 'Fuck the country,' Lee wrote, but Picasso liked Farley. Penrose exhibited Picasso at the ICA and wrote a biography of him; Picasso, in turn, had painted Lee. But the blonde beauty Picasso painted in 1937 was losing her looks; drink was taking its toll. And, like many great beauties, she found the dissolution of that beauty hard to bear.

Drink took its toll on her relationships too – particularly with her son, Antony. He asked his father not to let Lee meet him from school 'because if Mummy comes I am not sure I will recognise her'. In his teenage years, Antony writes, their relationship 'was to degenerate into open hostilities at every opportunity'. She was, he told one interviewer, 'a hopeless mum. She had no maternal instincts. "Give me a baby and I'll cook it," she used to say.' Antony took off, first to the Royal Agricultural College in Cirencester and then, in 1971, around the world (72,000 miles in a Land Rover). He met his wife-to-be, Suzanna, in Australia and married her in New Zealand, 'cabling perfunctorily' to let his parents know. Back in England, Suzanna effected a reconciliation, of sorts, between Antony and his mother. 'She built a bridge,' he tells me, 'and we met halfway, and had a rapprochement. We were like two people who knew each other very well but only then discovered we had an affection for each other – just in time.'

More was to come. When Lee died, ravaged with cancer, in 1977, Suzanna Penrose found more than 60,000 photographs, negatives and dispatches Miller had secreted in the attics of Farley Farm House. Antony was astounded. 'The first thing I came across was a report on the siege of Saint-Malo, an assault on a machine-gun post – the guys didn't have a chance. It was brilliant. And for 30 years I'd known her only as a useless drunk. So I thought it had to be someone else [writing]; it had to be an important war journalist. And it was – Lee Miller.'

The cache opened his eyes. No wonder she became the mother she did, Penrose thinks. 'Of course she suffered from PTSD. Acutely, acutely. Photographers are forced to look – there's no outlet. You have to see what's going on. Why should it be even remotely surprising if you go to the outer edge and it's indelible?' Worse, he believes, 'there was this sense of futility. She'd been through all that but nothing [in the world] had changed.'

Miller became Penrose's life. He put on exhibitions, wrote books, discovered her rape ('even my father didn't know'), opened Farley to the public and turned her into what she is now: not a footnote to the surrealists; not merely the beauty Condé Nast saved from the onrushing traffic; not just a half-forgotten war reporter/photojournalist. Instead, she's a blazing comet of achievement, shot through with inconsistencies and troubles, but truly an icon – an icon about whom it's only right that Antony Penrose should have the last word: 'I started writing her biography and I had the most amazing catharsis: I discovered this person I had great closeness to. And that was the best bit.' □

Lee Miller: A Woman's War is at the Imperial War Museum, London, 15 October–24 April.









Miller at the battlefront in Normandy, 1944. *Left*, the German-held Citadel in Saint-Malo under Allied air attack, 1944. *Above left*, Miller's 'Revenge on Culture', London, 1940. *Above right*, her shot of a German boot and ammunition, 1944

COTTON SHIRT, £790; SILK TIE, £215; WOOL-CREPE JUMPSUIT, £2,350, ALL BY **RALPH LAUREN COLLECTION**. LEATHER SHOES, £585, BY **MANOLO BLAHNIK**

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SWAROVSKI-CRYSTAL EMBROIDERED TOP, £1,745; VELVET TROUSERS, £925; SATIN, MESH & CRYSTAL SHOES, £685, ALL BY **GIORGIO ARMANI**



BEADED SILK-CHIFFON GOWN, £7,900, BY **MICHAEL KORS COLLECTION**. WHITE-GOLD & DIAMOND EARRINGS, POA, BY **BOUCHERON**



SILK-CHIFFON DRESS, £3,535, BY **EMILIO PUCCI**. LEATHER SHOES, £450, BY **JIMMY CHOO**

FOR STOCKISTS, SEE ADDRESS BOOK. HAIR BY STEPHEN LOW AT ELSL MANAGEMENT FOR NEVILLE SALON. MAKE-UP BY ATTRACTA COURTNEY, USING CHANEL LE LIFT AND LE VOLUME ULTRA-NOIR. MODEL, ANASTASIA IVANOVA AT PREMIER MODEL MANAGEMENT. WITH THANKS TO CHOREOGRAPHER ALEXANDER WHITLEY (ALEXANDERWHITLEY.COM). PRODUCTION, ELLE KORHALILLER. FASHION ASSISTANT, VIKTORIJA TOMASEVIC

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TATLER HOME

Edited by GERRI GALLAGHER

WE ARE NOT A MEWS...

Well, we are, actually, but one that has been blinged beyond recognition by the vivacious, party-loving, hot-dog impresario Marissa Hermer. Hermione Eyre gets the grand tour



MARISSA HERMER WEARS BONDED-CREPE DRESS, £1,490, BY ROKSANDA. WHITE-GOLD & DIAMOND EARRINGS, £18,400, BY SHAUN LEANE. *ON RIGHT WRIST, FROM LEFT,* WHITE-GOLD & DIAMOND BRACELET, £9,360, BY MESSIKA; WHITE-GOLD & DIAMOND BRACELET, £35,650, BY SHAUN LEANE. BRACELET ON LEFT WRIST, MARISSA'S OWN

MARISSA HERMER AT HER CHELSEA HOME, IN FRONT OF A PAINTING BY ANDREW NORREY

Photographed by MARK COCKSEDGE

Styled by SOPHIE GOODWIN







CLOCKWISE, FROM BOTTOM LEFT, THE BEDROOM TERRACE. JAKE, *LEFT*, & MAX IN THE KITCHEN NOOK. THE DINING AREA



Marissa Hermer sighs and shakes her golden head sadly. 'It's hard to fit a grand piano into a mews house.'

One can see why she is a hit on the ITV3 reality show *Ladies of London*, in which the cameras hang on her enjoyably ironic Marie Antoinette-style one-liners, delivered in a jaunty American accent. A cute, sunny Californian, she married the hospitality mogul Matt Hermer in 2010 and, since then, as well as launching Top Dog, her gourmet hot-dog joint in Soho, and giving birth to two children, she has also created an exquisite family home out of a modest mews house off the King's Road, extending upwards and downwards and compromising on nothing except, well, the upright piano.

She started with a classic London mews house not unlike Mick Jagger's in *Performance*: double garages flanking a steep central staircase, and, randomly, quarters for the birds that belonged to a local falconer. Marissa's unresting desire was to transform it into something very different. 'The Soho Beach House in Miami was my inspiration for this project.' True to her vision, she enlisted its creator, Martin Brudnizki, also known for the Dean Street Townhouse and Scott's, as interior designer.

They kept the historic façade and gutted the rest. Plans to build a roof deck were denied, but still, says Marissa, 'We've been able to carve out a 5,000-square-foot home.' By the skin of their teeth, as the great hollowing of Kensington and Chelsea has now come to an end and the Hermers, using the architectural practice Urban Infill, were amongst the last to create a subterranean maid's flat and gym two storeys down.

'Everyone on our street put in applications before the change,' says Marissa. 'It sounded like helicopters were landing. This is the first week there hasn't been any excavation going on.' The white-noise machines in their children's bedrooms have been put to good use. 'They're great for dinner parties too. Oh, you HAVE to get one.' When they were the ones doing the digging, Marissa apologised 'constantly' to the neighbours and presented them with homemade granola.

Marissa has a way with baked goods. She welcomed me into her house with freshly baked bran muffins sent over from Bumpkin restaurant, just round the corner and owned by her husband. Matt is CEO of Ignite Group, which also owns the Eclipse bar and a little South Ken nightclub you may have heard of called Boujis. 'We're in the hospitality business, so if we can't make people feel at home in our own home, we've got a problem,' says Marissa, throwing open a cupboard in the sitting room to reveal a tiny, perfectly stocked bar. For parties, the Hermers snatch a bow-tied bartender

JAKE HERMER WEARS COTTON DUNGAREES, £37; COTTON TOP £27. MAX HERMER WEARS COTTON TROUSERS, £39; COTTON SHIRT, £32, ALL BY CDEC BY CORDELIA DE CASTELLANE

JAKE & MARISSA IN THE SITTING ROOM, WHICH FEATURES ANOTHER ANDREW NORREY PAINTING



A PAINTING BY ANDREW NORREY HANGS IN THE STUDY

SILK GOWN, £1,960, BY JENNY PACKHAM. GOLD & DIAMOND NECKLACE, £2,990; GOLD & DIAMOND EARRINGS, £3,990; *ON LEFT WRIST, AT LEFT*, GOLD & DIAMOND BRACELET, £2,580, ALL BY BEE GODDESS. ALL OTHER JEWELLERY, MARISSA'S OWN. JAKE'S CLOTHES, AS BEFORE

'The Soho Beach House in Miami was my inspiration for this project'

from Eclipse to make watermelon martinis. When you run a hospitality empire, you can always get the staff.

Guests include Michelin-starred chef Tom Aikens and Fortnum & Mason's Ewan Venters, as well as Marissa's fashion friends – the stylist Martha Ward, designer Sofia Kah, editor Serena Hood and blogger Alice Naylor-Leyland, and her fellow reality-TV 'Ladies' Annabelle Neilson and Julie Montagu (aka Viscountess Hinchingbrooke). 'I like having a revolving-door feeling to the house.' She can even squeeze six toddlers – friends of her sons Max, three, and Jake, one – into the kitchen dining nook. When extra guests pile in for supper, the pouffes from the sitting room are pulled up to the table. Digital dimmers and a dramatic Soane pendant focus the light on the dining table, so you forget the kitchen is adjacent. The house's vibe is 'not at all precious – it's not the end of the world if a glass of wine is spilled'. Although preferably not on the Tai Ping silk carpet in the snug. Or the organic, woven Japanese seagrass walls. 'Martin [Brudnizki] really helped me embrace texture: wood, seagrass, leather. He convinced me it was OK to use colour. He re-educated my palette, so I now think that mustard is a neutral.'

In her previous life as a New York PR, Marissa relaunched the Gramercy Park Hotel for Ian Schrager, and she loves – as a legacy – an outsize velvet headboard. Climbing upstairs, she reveals the couple's suite, complete with a tiny terrace. 'Matt and I were selfish – we took the whole top floor for ourselves. So it's a serene little refuge we have for ourselves and the boys at weekends.' On the wall, an ▷





CLOCKWISE, FROM ABOVE, 'H I LOVE YOU', BY NEON CREATIONS, HANGS IN THE HERMERS' SUITE. AN OUTSIZE VELVET HEADBOARD RECALLS IAN SCHRAGER'S GRAMERCY PARK HOTEL IN NEW YORK. MATT & MARISSA AT THE FRONT DOOR



◁ artwork reads 'H I love you' in squiggly neon tubing. 'I got this made for Matt,' she says. 'It's in my handwriting. When I was living in New York, Matt was my secret boyfriend and I always used to call him "H", as a code for my friends, in the same way Carrie had "Big"'.

Almost all the other art in the house is by English artist Andrew Norrey. 'I got so excited by his work I bought way too much of it.' Over the main fireplace is an oil painting in different hues of green. 'Maybe it's not necessarily avant-garde' – her voice is suddenly less confident – 'but those are the colours I wanted for this room. I'm obsessed with lime green.'

It's hard not to spot Marissa's organisational powers. In the playroom, woven Pottery Barn

Double doors conceal an immaculate 'beverage garage', in which every teabag has its place

bags keep playthings themed. Toy cars are individually presented in Perspex cases from Muji. 'The kids are probably as OCD as me. Their favourite thing to do is to organise.' In the kitchen, double doors conceal an immaculate 'beverage garage', in which every teabag has its place.

As we approach the basement, she pauses. 'This is where Matt was meant to have an amazing wine cellar in glass that was going to be really sexy and cool. We called it the Man Cave. But then we kept tweaking things and we realised we just needed a bigger playroom.' Alas, the fate of so many Man Caves.

There's a happy atmosphere in Marissa's house, and every inch is put to good use. Internal windows onto the staircase give the illusion of light and space, and traditional stair rods and panelling nod to English style, while the square provides all the garden one needs. With London space at its current premium, this is the very model of a modern Chelsea home. □

MARISSA & MATT'S CLOTHES, THEIR OWN. FOR STOCKISTS, SEE ADDRESS BOOK. HAIR & MAKE-UP BY RACHEL JONES AT TERRI MANDUCA, USING BOBBI BROWN

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makeover, Focus has the answer. All of the showrooms will have specialists on hand to answer design dilemmas. Expect workshops, presentations and Q&A forums. Lively talks will include 'Conversations in Design' with top influential names and a session with our very own executive fashion and retail editor, Mariella Tandy. The pop-up *Tatler* Restaurant will provide sustenance as you explore. Oh, and did we mention entry is free? This is not to be missed.

MAIN IMAGE, 'BACKGAMMON TABLE', OOMPH AT **NINA CAMPBELL.** 'BORROMINI' SOFA, **FENDI CASA**. CUSHIONS ON SOFA FROM ***TOP,*** 'BALIBAR', 'SORIA' AND 'ARGAN', ELITIS AT **ABBOTT & BOYD.** 'FANTE' COFFEE TABLE, **GALLOTTI & RADICE**. TRIANGLE COVERED IN 'CARIOCA KEY' FABRIC, BEACON HILL AND 'NUIMI' VELVET, BLACK EDITION AT **ROMO**

ABOVE LEFT, 'CALLE LARGA' CHAIR, RUBELLI CASA AT **RUBELLI/ DONGHIA**

RIGHT, 'JUSTIN' DESK, **ARMANI/CASA**







CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE, 'WARRINGTON', 'MARBLE' AND 'WARRINGTON', **TIM PAGE CARPETS.** 'CHAYA X', VICARA AT **TAI PING CARPETS**



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TOP LEFT, 'THE TALISMAN MIRROR', **DAVIDSON**

MAIN IMAGE, 'FABULA' SOFA, UMBERTO ASNAGO, GIORGETTI AT **INTERIOR SUPPLY.** 'FRED' CUSHION, **LELIEVRE.** 'WHAT NOT', OOMPH AT **NINA CAMPBELL.** 'GARDEN' TABLE LAMP, **NICHOLAS HASLAM LTD.** 'EVA H' RUG, **TUFENKIAN ARTISAN CARPETS.** 'BYZANTINE' COFFEE TABLE, **SIMPSONS MIRRORS & FURNITURE.** WENGE TIMBER TRAY, ALEXANDER JAMES ACCESSORIES AT **SIMPSONS MIRRORS & FURNITURE.** 'OPTIC' TUMBLERS, **NINA CAMPBELL**

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ABOVE, 'INDIGO CUBISTIC' VASE TALL, 'INDIGO CUBISTIC' VASE ROUND', **NICHOLAS HASLAM LTD**

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For more details on Focus/15 at Design Centre, Chelsea Harbour, please call 020 7225 9166 or visit dcch.co.uk



THIS IMAGE, 'PIRON' CHAIR, RUBELLI CASA, UPHOLSTERED IN 'VELOURS TRESSE', DOMINIQUE KIEFFER, BOTH AT **RUBELLI/DONGHIA.** 'GRACE' LAMP WITH 13" 'TOP HAT' SHADE, **PORTA ROMANA.** 'DAMA' COFFEE TABLE AND 'GOLDEN MOON' COFFEE TABLE, **BOTH GALLOTTI & RADICE.** ENLARGED CUSHION COVER: 'BIRD CROSSING', ENLARGED MONKEYS TAKEN FROM 'MONKEY PALM', BOTH HALSTED AT **COLONY**

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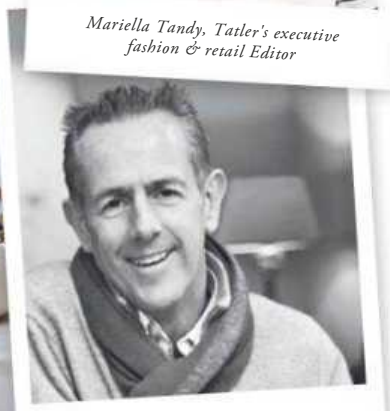
★TATLER RESTAURANT

The pop-up Tatler Restaurant on the Ground Floor, North Dome is one of the most anticipated features of Focus/15. Specially created for the event, and featuring stylish designs of the new season, it provides the perfect setting in which to chill out. The menu has something for everyone too, with seasonally inspired choices from Absolute Taste. Perch at the central bar or stop by for breakfast from 9.30am, lunch from 12.30pm or tea from 3.30pm. Fully revived, you can return to the show with a spring in your step. What a delicious thought!



Mariella Tandy, Tatler's executive fashion & retail Editor





Stephen Woodhams

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Opening hours 10am–6pm @DesignCentreCH #Focus15

Mariella Tandy rounds up the hot stuff for your house, inside and out

THE IT LIST

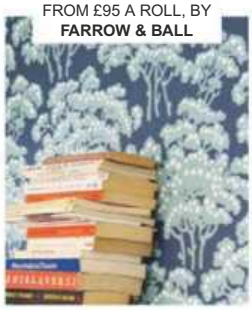
FROM £76 A ROLL, BY **COLE & SON**



Gold standard

All that glitters is not gold. Unless it's this Moroccan-inspired **Cole & Son** wallpaper. Also in other colours. *cole-and-son.com*

FROM £95 A ROLL, BY **FARROW & BALL**



You've got to love **Farrow & Ball**. Inspired by classic English gardens, their new Hornbeam wallpaper features a pattern of cloud-like trees. *farrow-ball.com*



£1,155, BY **OKA**

Puzzle it out

If a tray fell in love with a table and they had a furniture cuddle, the result of their romance would be this **OKA** Puzzle Table. You can even arrange the top in different ways. *okadirect.com*

LOVE SHACK

Cabins by **Shackadelic** are cabins with a conscience: created with ethically sourced and often reclaimed materials, they all have the added bonus of being built entirely to your specifications. Want a light, airy workspace to actually WORK? Done. Or a private little haven for retreating from your shouting children? Also done. *shackadelic.co.uk*

FROM £1,250 A SQUARE METRE, BY **SHACKADELIC**



Oh, they're clever, these pretty li'l **Vaughan** wall lights. All hand-carved natural stone and alabaster, they radiate art-deco vibes. You can put them in your bathroom too. Good-looking AND thoughtful – we'd quite like to marry them. *vaughandesigns.com*



£601, BY **VAUGHAN**

GREY PRIDE



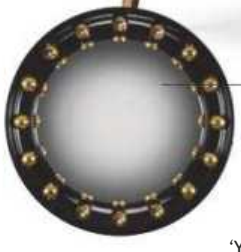
£45, BY **INDIA JANE**

1 THE VICTORIANS WERE OBSESSED WITH PINEAPPLES. AND ONCE YOU OWN THESE **INDIA JANE** BOOKENDS, YOU WILL BE TOO. *INDIAJANE.CO.UK*

2 YES, YOU WILL SWOON, BECAUSE **SWOON EDITIONS** MAKE SENSATIONAL BUT AFFORDABLE HANDMADE PIECES, LIKE THIS DREAMY STONEWASHED-GREY KARLA ARMCHAIR. *SWOONEDITIONS.COM*



£329, BY **SWOON EDITIONS**



£6,516, BY **DAVIDSON**

3 YOU: 'MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL, WHO'S THE FAIREST OF THEM ALL?' BLACK-AND-GOLD-LEAF MIRROR BY **DAVIDSON**: 'I AM.' YOU: 'YOU ARE, ACTUALLY.' MIRROR: 'I KNOW.' *DAVIDSONLONDON.COM*

*Your bed is incalculably important. You need to start showing it some love. We suggest starting with **Yves Delorme**, who are celebrating 170 years of bed-linen excellence with their new Calicot Lit range, from £60. How does a printed 200-thread-count percale grab you? yvesdelormeparis.com*







SOPHIE ANDERTON AND DR GALYNA

FREEZE FRAME

CoolSculpting in action at the Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park

The Mandarin Oriental in Knightsbridge was recently overrun by a stampede of glamorous ladies and dashing gents seeking the insider track on hot cosmetic treatment,CoolSculpting. And they weren't disappointed. Dr Rita Rakus together with her team of specialists, Dr Galyna and Mr Golchin hosted an evening that was both informative and fun. Guests enjoyed champagne, canapés and gluten-free cupcakes from Beyond Bread.There was plenty to take in. Tamara Eccelestone's Show Dry pop-up hair bar tamed wayward locks, designer Donna Ida's denim bar attracted the fashion magpies and a catwalk show featuring Storm models showcased Heidi Klein's latest swimwear. This was followed by the highlight of the evening – a demonstration of the CoolSculpting procedure by Dr Galyna with the opportunity for a Q&A. A whirlwind evening, we'd expect nothing less from London's Lip Queen!

Visit drritarakus.com or call 020 7460 7324. Dr Rakus is based at 34 Hans Road (opposite Harrods), Knightsbridge, London SW3 1RW



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MR GOLCHIN AND DR RITA RAKUS



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*Source: The NPD Group value sales Jan-Dec 2014. **Consumer test conducted in the UK on 377 women.

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TATLER BEAUTY

Edited by FRANCESCA WHITE



TIME TO... APPLY YOURSELF

Does applying your eye cream put you in a good mood? Do you feel properly, *physically* better after you've put on your moisturiser? Well, you could. Research shows that if your facial muscles are tensed, you experience more negative emotions. Relax them and anxiety decreases. It explains why Botox – which enforces relaxation by temporarily paralysing muscles – prevents migraines. (Its effects can also make you happier. But that's another topic.)

When you're stressed, your body produces more cortisol, triggering inflammation and manifesting in outbreaks, sensitivity, and generally under-par skin. Massage the face – those muscles that are constantly working, twitching, creating expressions – and everything unclenches. A relaxed face equals a sunnier disposition. And a sunnier disposition means better-behaved skin.

The hope that a product might make us look younger also makes us happy. Secreted from a sleek golden nib that fits neatly into the eye contour, Guerlain's Abeille Royale Eye Sculpt Serum, £79, uses plant extracts – claimed to increase collagen – to strengthen the skin. A few goes (morning and night) feel like one of those slightly magical facials where cold marble wands are rolled around your sockets.

Otherwise, there's Le Lift Recontouring Massage Mask, £60, by Chanel. Stuffed full of their patented 3.5-DA molecule, which promises to firm skin by revving up fibroblasts, it's already rather wonderful. Smooth it on with their Accessorie de Massage, £25 (curved and weighty, it looks like a silver puzzle piece), and not only does it boost circulation and wake up the skin's connective tissue, but the sensation is lovely. You feel happier; your skin looks better. Your skin looks better; you feel happier. That's it, really. ***FW***

PHOTOGRAPH: BETTMANN/CORBIS



The hunt for PERFECT SKIN

Do you ever look at your face and think, bloody hell, what is that new blob or crease or random patch of pigment, it certainly wasn't there yesterday? If the answer is yes, then read on – there are solutions

You know when you wake up in the middle of the night and your busy, bastard brain kicks in? Well, you don't think about your successes, do you? You don't mull over your personal triumphs. You don't brim with optimism about the future and bask in contentment about the more glorious aspects of your past. (Unless you are most unusual. And peculiar. And, frankly, sinister.) Your brain does a staggeringly efficient sweep to find the dog poo on the football pitch of your life.

Similarly(ish), when you look in the mirror your eyes are drawn to the weird bits on your skin. Not the big stuff: the clear eyes, the nice mouth, the cute/noble/characterful nose, the decent cheekbones, the haughty brows or whatever. It's the detail. Your eyes rake over your skin, scanning for trouble. They zone in on the blobs and tags, the pores and veins, the stains and pimples. And then your day is a little bit less happy. Just a little bit. No one's calling you obsessive, but once you notice these mini-flaws, they prey on your mind. You can't go to the loo without having a quick examine and a micro-lament.

That's why we call them niggles. Because they are like itches. So here are the targeted solutions. Consider the niggles taken care of. That's what we're here for – to scratch your itches. ***AR***

PHOTOGRAPH: KEVIN TACHMAN/TRUNK ARCHIVE

SPOTS

About spots It might be stating the obvious to describe a spot, but we are all, at various stages of our life, prone to them. A spot comes about when excess sebum gets trapped in a pore. Combine this with dead skin cells and bacteria, and you end up with a blockage that, once inflamed and infected, becomes red and angry-looking. Spots are also triggered by hormonal changes – for example, puberty, coming off the pill and high levels of cortisol (often a result of stress) – that can make sebaceous glands overactive. Too-rich skincare and silicone-based products might also contribute to spots, as they can clog the skin.
Who to see Katherine Jackson.
The fix The key to treating spots, according to Katherine, is a tailored course of (gentle) treatment: if the spots are mild, this means treatment every three weeks. If the spots are severe, then she may get you in on a weekly basis. She's a big fan of salicylic-acid peels: more comfortable than glycolic peels, which spots tend not to tolerate well, they regulate sebum production. But the star in her line-up is a whizzy machine: a slim metal plate, held against the skin, that uses ultrasound waves to deep-clean pores, pushing out any soft debris. She likes to finish up with a bit of IPL (intense pulsed light) to help spots heal.
Products to use People with spots tend to treat their skin quite harshly, says Katherine, but overcleaning can get rid of good bacteria, leaving nothing to fight infection. So she mixes up her own simple products for you to take away, like a herb-based cleansing gel that balances sebum and a light lotion containing hyaluronic acid and magnolia, to hydrate and prevent inflammation. There's no scent at all, and no alcohols or detergents, which strip skin's essential oils.
The follow-up It's important to shield skin, but avoid using thick, greasy SPFs – mineral powders (like Laura Mercier Mineral Powder SPF 15, £31) are a good alternative.
Details £180 for 90 minutes. At 2 Michael Road, SW6 (katherinejackson.co.uk; 020 7371 0444).



PIGMENTATION

About pigmentation Hyperpigmentation – which produces darkened, irregular blotches on the surface of the skin – occurs when cells produce too much melanin. (Hypopigmentation, on the other hand, results in white patches and is caused by a lack of melanin.) Hormones, antibiotics and pregnancy are some of the usual suspects, but hyperpigmentation most commonly occurs following trauma to the skin – UV damage, for instance – which leads to cell mutation beneath the skin. And when a skin cell mutates, it's like a bad photocopier – it keeps printing out more and more rogue cells. Those cells then kick out too much melanin and begin to latch onto one another in clusters. Larger patches form and the pigmentation becomes more noticeable.
Who to see Lisa McAvoy at Sarah Chapman.
The fix Hyperpigmentation is tricky to treat – you have to blitz it with something intense, like the Cosmelan system. So Lisa begins by painting the skin with a thick, mustard-coloured mask – a combination of acids and active ingredients that go deep down into the dermis and blast pigmentation apart. When it's on, it doesn't feel too bad – maybe a tad warm. Head straight home with this on (we advise you take a cab). Lisa will instruct you *not to touch it* for four to six hours; only then are you allowed to wash it off with cold water. Gently apply an emollient cream, to keep the skin feeling comfortable, for the next few hours. You'll *really* feel heat in the skin the day after, but 48 hours later is when it smarts the most, because the Cosmelan treatment forces the skin to regenerate very quickly – so you get a lot of shedding, peeling and swelling as cells are propelled to the surface at high speed. It's not for people who can't handle downtime, but it is possible to schedule the treatment cleverly: book in for a Thursday, take the Friday off and by Monday the worst of it will be over.
Products to use Sun protection is crucial. (Lisa recommends Heliocare Advanced SPF 50 Gel, £21). She'll also get you taking Skinesis Overnight Facial Supplements (£46 at victoria health.com), which contain omegas, as well as zinc and vitamin C to help skin heal.
The follow-up Lisa advises a maintenance cream – similar to the Cosmelan treatment, but at a lower dosage – that you will need to apply every day for a month, reducing to two or three times a week for the next few months. You will notice a lightening of hyperpigmentation in two weeks, but a month on is when you'll see a real improvement. Long-term change comes with three to six months of maintenance.
Details Cosmelan treatment, £800 for consultation and aftercare. At 259 Pavilion Road, SW1 (sarah chapman.net; 020 7589 9585).



PORES

About pores The main function of pores (those little dots on your face – noticeably, those on your nose or forehead) is to secrete sebum to the skin's surface to keep it moisturised. As we age, however, pores tend not to look as tight and youthful as they once did. This is because a pore is also a muscle, and thus needs to be exercised. You cannot physically shrink a pore, but you can make it contract, giving it a smaller, neater appearance. You must also remember that pores are holes and will get clogged over time – so you need to be vigilant about keeping them clean.
Who to see Nataliya Robinson.
The fix After studying your pores seriously under a magnifying lamp, Nataliya begins by eliminating any debris. First, sea salt mixed with a booster rich in alpha-hydroxy acids (AHAs) is painted on to help the pores to open without the use of steam (which can aggravate sensitive skin) before anything lurking inside is manually extracted. This is mandatory and it might sting – but even the most stubborn plugs of dirt and sebum are swiftly evacuated. You can't see them (although others can), but your ears also have pores. So Nataliya delves inside them with what looks like a large looped needle, pressing around the pore's circumference and squeezing out its contents. Once the pores are squeaky clean, she sets about tightening them with a 'green peel' – stuffed with plants, like spirulina and horsetail, it stimulates connective tissue, helping strengthen pore walls. The sensation is, quite frankly, like having nettles massaged into your face, and things feel prickly for a few days afterwards – but just a week on, by which time the top layer of skin has been shed, the peskiest of pores appear to have been magicked away.
Products to use German brand Dr Med Christine Schrammek is full of antibacterial herbs and sebum-regulating algae (the anti-inflammatory Blemish Balm, from £22, is good for disguising any redness).
The follow-up Nataliya sends you away with the tools to keep things looking shipshape – starflower-oil capsules (to improve skin health) and even psyllium husk (to keep you regular – crucial for a nice complexion). Be careful with self-tan, she warns: it can get stuck in pores. Sisley Self-Tanning Hydrating Facial Skin Care, £83.50, is non-comedogenic.
Details From £160. At Chelsea or Hampstead (nataliyarobinson.co.uk; 07774 544455). ▷



MILIA

About milia Milia are a combination of keratin (dead skin cells) and oil that, when trapped beneath the surface of skin, form small white cysts. If you are susceptible to milia, the chances are that you are still figuring out how to tackle them. What you must *not* do is squeeze them. This is because milia sit beneath the epidermis, so unlike blackheads or spots, which sit above the epidermis and can (with care) be safely popped, squeezing milia will often lead to pigmentation or scarring. Around the eyes and nose and along the cheekbones are the most common places for milia to occur (the skin is thinner here) and they often cluster in groups. It is uncertain what causes milia, but it is believed that substances like mineral oils and silicones, which can accumulate beneath the skin, are often to blame.

Who to see Tarryn Warren at PfefferSu.

The fix Before attempting to dislodge anything, Tarryn gets to work with a pomegranate enzyme peel to dissolve dead skin cells and get them flaking off naturally (instead of building up beneath the surface). Then, using a lance needle (it won't cause damage to surrounding skin), she punctures the offending milium – piercing the layer of skin that has settled on top – before pushing out the trapped keratin using a muslin cloth.

Products to use Enzyme-based exfoliators will slough off dead keratin and help prevent future outbreaks. Tarryn recommends Cane & Austin Retexturizing Treatment Pads, £48, for oily skin; Elemis Papaya Enzyme Peel, £32, is good on dry skin. A cotton-wool bud soaked in apple cider vinegar, dabbed on any offending milia every night, will also help to bring the trapped keratin to the surface.

The follow-up Drink more water and up the amount of good fats in your diet – this will keep skin moisturised and stop keratin from sticking together, preventing future milia.



Details From £110. At 21a Foley Street, W1 (pfeffersu.com; 07480 671275).

SCARS

About scars Scarring can take many forms: raised, keloid, pigmented, pitted. But the scars most commonly found on our faces are a result of acne – from picking at spots, breaking the skin and wounding it. Such meddling creates what dermatologists refer to as 'ice-pick scarring' – deep, vertical indentations, usually tiny, sometimes not – on the surface of the skin. Chickenpox can have a similar effect.

Who to see Samantha Fermia at Dr Michael Prager Clinic & Spa.

The fix What you need to do, according to Samantha, is build density in the skin. This will even out the area and help to smooth out depressed scars. To get this reaction, however, you need to injure the skin quite severely. So Samantha will come at your scars with a dermaroller: it looks like a spiky wheel, and she proceeds to run it across your face – vertically, diagonally, horizontally – in a criss-cross pattern, ensuring that the site is injured intensively. It sounds a bit nasty, but what it's doing is stimulating growth factors in the epidermis, encouraging the skin to plump up and thicken. Normal dermarollers are equipped with titanium needles anywhere from 0.5mm long, but for ice-pick scars, Samantha will use something around the 1.5–3mm mark, as the indentations are that much deeper. It doesn't take long – around 30 seconds for the actual dermaroller, plus about 20 minutes of topical anaesthetic beforehand to minimise the stinging. Once skin is sufficiently punctured, it is fed with a mixture of vitamins A, C and E to help fortify it further. There's definite downtime: the longer needles mean that you might experience mild bruising, redness and bit of swelling too, but this is good – you want to see an injury. Only this will spur an improvement.

Products to use Samantha recommends the SkinCeuticals range, whose products contain high levels of L-ascorbic acid (a protective antioxidant that also prevents pigmentation) and growth factors (necessary to help repair the skin). Phloretin C F Gel, £150, is good for oilier skins; C E Ferulic, £129, is wonderful if your skin tends to be a little red or fiery. Supplements also help: zinc is brilliant for speeding up skin recovery.



The follow-up Pop back for a top-up every three to four weeks – you'll see an increase in volume after just one session, but best results are visible with six to eight sessions. Samantha will also get you in for a final check-up one month after your final treatment so that she can monitor the progress of your scars and compare before-and-after photos.

Details From £595 per session for the whole face. At 25 Wimpole Street, W1 (drmichael prager.com; 020 7323 3660).

BLOBS

About blobs The correct name for these fleshy, skin-coloured lesions is 'intradermal naevi' – but that's a bit of a tongue-twister, so we will refer to them as 'blobs'. Simply put, blobs are raised, colourless moles – the lack of pigment is due to the melanocytes being buried deep beneath the skin. They occur when there is increased production of naevus cells in the dermis, a common part of ageing, although you can be genetically predisposed to them. Blobs tend to be benign – though hair-bearing blobs can often become infected if germs pass into them via the follicle.

Who to see Dr Susan Mayou and Dr Bryan Mayou at the Cadogan Clinic.

The fix Come in to have a rogue blob checked out and Dr Susan Mayou examines not just your face, but also your body, very thoroughly. If you're having one taken off, she says, you may as well do the lot – it saves time and money. Dr Mayou can shave the blob, but this won't remove it completely, because it has a sort of 'root' that exists beneath the skin's surface and can cause the blob to return. For permanent removal, however, she will refer you to her surgeon husband, Bryan Mayou, who – after administering a local anaesthetic – will excise the blob once and for all. There's no sensation aside from the pressure of the scalpel against the skin, and it takes around 20 minutes for one, 30 minutes for three. (Chances are that if you are prone to them, you will have more than one.) A few stitches and the end result is a fine scar: a little line that fades with time (the face, compared to the body, heals well), whereas blobs only increase in size over time.

Products to use Once the stitches have been removed (after five to seven days) and you can press the area without discomfort, massage gently with something bland like E45. Silicone gel (Dr Susan Mayou recommends Kelo-Cote UV, £29, which has an inbuilt SPF 30) is also great – wear it every day until you've forgotten about the scar.

The follow-up Keep the blob dry for the duration of the recovery period (you can apply tiny skin-coloured plasters to avoid drawing attention to the area). And carry on as you were.



Details Consultation with Dr Susan Mayou, £250; removal with Dr Bryan Mayou, from £550. At the Cadogan Clinic, 120 Sloane Street, SW1 (cadogan clinic.com; 020 7901 8500). ***FW***

FACE TIME

Need a lift? Dr Dray's pick-me-up treatments are designed to restore va-va-voom in mere minutes



The French really are masters of beauty. Their effortless *je ne sais quoi* is coveted the world over. And when your cosmetic surgeon is French and speaks fluent *chic*? Ah, then the magic really happens! Dr Dray, an esteemed pioneer of cosmetic excellence, has clocked up 30 years' experience, dividing his time between his London and Paris clinics. His advanced methods, lightness of touch and dedication to show-stopping results make him a popular choice among A-listers. Its time you followed suit. Let Dr Dray upgrade your complexion with these non-surgical treatments. Your natural beauty will be maximised, in minutes, with no downtime. *Oh la la*!

MESOLIFT

Dr Dray has been credited with advancing mesotherapy technology and creating the incredible Mesolift. A cocktail to make you look younger? Yes, really. Hydrating and restorative, Dray's Mesolift cocktail is chock-full of super ingredients – vitamins, minerals and amino acids – and administered to the skin via micro air-gun injections. It returns elasticity and bounce by aiding tissue reconstruction. The result? An utterly refreshed complexion. Skin will radiate a polished lustre. Best of all, the treatment can be fully customised to your specific needs. This is the go-to pre-party treatment for fresh, dewy skin. Get set, glow.

10-MINUTE FACELIFT

Has your skin lost its bounce? You need Dr Dray's fast-acting beauty solution. A facelift without the invasive surgery, this treatment is transformative – plumping and restoring skin in minutes. How? Calcium injections are used to boost collagen (that natural elixir of youth), giving skin a structural lift. Results are nothing short of incredible. Sagging skin is lifted and fine lines are ironed out. Skin appears refined and taut with volume restored. Even better, the lift is non-allergic and there are no secondary effects. Results last up to 15 months. All that in just 10 minutes!



6-POINT LIFT

Luckily, Dr Dray has a six-point plan to make your face beam with loveliness. Targeting six areas in particular need of TLC – those wrinkle-prone regions around the mouth, eyes, side and top of cheekbones – this treatment plumps out lines in a flash. How? It's all down to science. The lift harnesses the power of hyaluronic acid, which is injected into key areas of the face. Hyaluronic acid is a vital cushioning agent that keeps skin supple, bouncy and bright. It is a naturally occurring substance in our bodies but declines with age – sigh. Of course, this leads to dryness, wrinkles and sagging. So you want to keep hyaluronic acid around. And the six-point lift from Dr Dray does just that. Dr Dray customises the density of hyaluronic acid for each specific area, just as he customises all treatments to the patient's individual needs. So the lift works for you. And because the ingredient is natural, the effects are natural and nuanced.

Clinic Dray London, 11b Albert Place, London W8 5PD. Tel: 020 7937 1031; info@drdray.co.uk; drdray.co.uk



A question of scale

Gavanndra Hodge has tried almost every psoriasis treatment out there, and thinks she just might have found a solution...

Psoriasis isn't cool or glamorous; it doesn't have millions of Instagram followers or really great eyebrows. Cara Delevingne, however, is cool and glamorous, and she also happens to have psoriasis, which makes me feel slightly less ashamed of the fact that for 20 years I have been secretly scratching and trying to work out how to get rid of this unsightly, deeply irritating problem, which dermatologists and doctors say is incurable.

About two per cent of the population suffer from psoriasis, an autoimmune inflammatory condition that causes skin cells to mature much more rapidly than they ought to – over two to four days rather than two to four weeks – resulting in red, scaly, flaky patches that are maddeningly pleasurable to itch.

Like Cara, like many people, I first got it when I was in my early 20s. I was just out of university, living a fast life in London, working, partying, drinking, smoking. My health wasn't something I gave much thought to, my body was in perfect order and I didn't worry about what I was subjecting it to in this busy hunt for pleasure. I thought the red patches on my elbows were just dry skin. I wasn't a big one, back then, for exfoliating and moisturising, which seemed a bit French and a waste of time when there was so much fun to be had beyond the bathroom, but I relented and started using increasingly expensive creams to try and get rid of the stubborn patches. Lesson one: moisturising creams will not get rid of psoriasis. However expensive they are, however assiduously you apply them, however persuasively they are named. Just because it is called 'miracle balm' does not mean that a £40 pot of cream can perform miracles. Believe me, I have spent the last two decades testing them all, each time I opened a new jar, hoping – against hope – that this would be the one. It never is.

Of course, there are creams that do work: steroid creams – or topical corticosteroids, to give them their fancy name – which suppress an overactive immune system and thereby reduce inflammation. I was first prescribed steroid cream when the psoriasis spread to behind my ears, which occurred at the same time as a particularly stressful period at work – stress and alcohol, according to dermatologist Dr Sam Bunting (drsambunting.com), are both triggers. At first, steroid cream seems like a miracle, delivering smooth, perfect skin after just days. But it only treats the symptoms, and you are only allowed to use it for a week or so because overuse thins the skin, and as soon as you stop, the psoriasis returns, more aggressive than ever.

So I tried other approaches. I tried Chinese medicine, boiling up bark and other weird things to make a tarry tea that tasted beyond disgusting and made me feel very peculiar but had no effect on my psoriasis. I tried kinesiology, which involves holding little bottles of things you might be allergic to while a therapist tests your strength by pushing down your arm. It turned out I had to avoid drinking alcohol and eating sugar at the same time, which was depressing, although apparently I was fine with expensive Bordeaux. I tried homeopathy. I tried giving up sugar, alcohol, caffeine, salt. Nothing made any difference. I was admitted as an outpatient to the King's College Hospital dermatology department and told that my condition wasn't severe enough to prescribe UV-light therapy, another effective – albeit time-consuming – treatment, as the psoriasis was covering less than five per cent of my body. So I was discharged. And all the while I itched and was ashamed and left flakes of me wherever I went.

Then I got pregnant. And the psoriasis went, just like that – no creams, no giving up cake, no expensive/ridiculous alternative therapies. Just being pregnant. My skin remained clear the whole time I was breastfeeding too, so after 18 months I'd nearly forgotten that I'd ever had a problem. And then my daughter moved on to formula milk and I went back to work and my psoriasis returned. I started using a vitamin D cream, which, when used in conjunction with a steroid cream, can be very effective, and this did keep things under control. But applying creams all the time is boring, and it can be messy, and I didn't always remember to do it. My psoriasis remained.

Things have changed in the past 20 years – new, harder-hitting injectable drugs, which suppress the immune system, have been developed. 'They are called biologics,' Bunting explains. 'They can target both the skin changes associated with psoriasis and also the frequently debilitating arthritis it can be connected with. Their main limitation is that they're very expensive.'

Fortunately, so far, my psoriasis has never been bad enough to warrant the really serious treatments that some sufferers require. And about this time last year, I had come to a place of acceptance with the condition. I felt like I had tried everything. I knew how to keep it under control and how diligent I was prepared to be. I didn't really notice the patches on my elbows any more – they had been with me so long that they felt like they were part of me.

Then I began seeing an acupuncturist called Laura Jones (laurajonesacupuncture.com) for other reasons. She does a pretty magical anti-ageing acupuncture facial that also involves normal acupuncture and reiki. After six months of twice-monthly visits, without my even realising, the patches on my elbows had gone. Jones explained that it was all about taking heat out of my body, particularly my liver; heat caused by stress, anger, suppressed emotions, overindulgence; heat that had accumulated over all those years and never been dispersed. And now I feel my skin starting to play up when I have taken on too much and know that I need to slow down. The psoriasis has become a sort of gauge of my wellbeing – and we all need one of those. □

PHOTOGRAPH: CORBIS


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TO SPRUCE UP

Where **Show Dry**

The lowdown Have you noticed how all the women of Notting Hill suddenly have near-perfect hair? It's because they come here. Pitch up at the super-smart salon – done out in black, with reflective rose-gold surfaces – with hair that's in need of a wash or still damp from the shower, slump into a swivelly chair, order a juice and let the amazingly efficient team wash, dry, tong or twiddle it up into something more presentable – and in less than 40 minutes.

Our verdict Basically, you'll never want to wash your hair yourself again. But it's the practical details that stand out: brollies by the door, a nappy-changing station downstairs, iPads. Plus the opening hours (7am–9pm on weekdays) are beyond pleasing.

Details At 173 Westbourne Grove, W11. Signature blowdry, £35 (showdry.com; 0333 006 8888).

TO HANG OUT

PICK ME!

Where **Gazelli House**

The lowdown Wander into Gazelli's gorgeous, newly opened townhouse on Walton Street and you feel like you're in someone's sitting room – all smoothly worn wooden floorboards, art on the walls, and buttery leather armchairs for sinking into with a book and a fresh mint tea. You could remain here contentedly. Or you could descend a golden staircase to the treatment rooms for a diagnostic (and slightly magical) facial. Or nip upstairs, where visiting therapists practise their own special sort of magic (acupuncture, healing, kinesiology). Otherwise, head to the sunny, whitewashed terrace for a spot of lunch. Linger for long enough, and you might find yourself under a soft blanket for an impromptu film screening.

Our verdict You'll come for a 60-minute facial and drift out having lost four hours. But you, and your skin, will be happier.

Details At 174 Walton Street, SW3. Prescriptive facial from £145 for 60 minutes (gazellihouse.com; 020 7581 4355).

TO WORK OUT

Where **Bodyism**

The lowdown Exercising at Bodyism's shiny new home – in the former post office on Westbourne Grove – will genuinely make you a merrier person. Not just because you can get high on endorphins, leaping around the vast playground of a gymnasium in a one-to-one session, or because you can zone out at the end of a class with some meditation. Nor because you can wriggle into a pair of their snazzy, bottom-lifting leggings in the shop, or slurp a frothy post-workout smoothie from the healthy and virtuous café. *But,* because you can do it all under lights that boost your levels of vitamin D (it's said to make you less anxious) – which means you'll probably exercise more as well.

Our verdict Bodyism has been conspicuously absent for a while, but this place has been more than worth the wait. Membership is set to skyrocket, so join the queue.

Details At 224 Westbourne Grove, W11. Membership, from £1,800 per year (bodyism.com).

TO WALLOW

Where **House of Elemis**

The lowdown The Mayfair mews flagship has been brought up to date: now it's light-flooded and lovely, without a Buddha or a wind chime in sight. Head for the Speed Spa – it's as slick as a first-class cabin, with wi-fi and whizzy chairs for nails, brows and waxing. Up a floor, treatment rooms include one for mothers-to-be with a comfy beanbag contraption you mould to your bump. In the penthouse – pale-grey walls studded with ceramic petals – crash out on the cloud-like treatment table for a facial, or sink into what looks like a sandpit filled with crystals and be pummelled with poultices.

Our verdict The therapists are pros, the treatments effective. And the concierge will book you a taxi, a table for lunch or a blowdry.

Details At 2 Lancashire Court, W1. Freestyle Deep Tissue Massage, £95 for 60 minutes (elemis.com; 020 7499 4995).

TO ANTI-AGE

Where **Sarah Chapman Skinesis Clinic**

The lowdown It's not like we didn't love the shoebox-sized clinic on Draycott Avenue (its tininess undoubtedly adding to its charm – as well as to its waiting list). But the new flagship has more than double the space (3,000 square feet!). Which means seven light-filled treatment rooms for Sarah's skin-rebooting facials (or, at the punchier end of the spectrum, Botox and fillers), LED pods for zippy red- or blue-light therapy, and a futuristic-looking bar where you can play with products and watch video tutorials.

Our verdict Needless to say, we're rather thrilled by this development. And praying that it makes the gold-dust-like appointments slightly easier to nab.

Details At 259 Pavilion Road, London SW1. Bespoke facial, £125 for 60 minutes (sarahchapman.net; 020 7589 9585).

PHOTOGRAPH: HENRY CLARKE/CONDE NAST ARCHIVE

DNA PRESCRIBED SKINCARE

DNA testing has never looked so glamorous. Skincare innovator GENEU is using its unique patented DNA microchip test to prescribe truly personalised skincare

Welcome to the future. It's not so much hoverboards and silver jumpsuits as it is groundbreaking skincare. Thanks to GENEU, science fiction has become science fact. A company of scientists and skincare specialists, GENEU offers the world's first on-the-spot DNA test. It examines two genetic biomarkers – one responsible for the skin's predisposition to collagen breakdown and the other for antioxidant protection. Your result determines your skincare. Does your skin need to ramp up its defence against free radicals? Do you need help slowing the natural breakdown of skin-plumping collagen? This information is then coupled with your lifestyle analysis (do you smoke? do you wear SPF?) and passed through an intelligent bank of DNA combinations, with multiple variations to give you your personalised anti-ageing serums. One is designed to enhance your natural antioxidant levels while the other is created to support your natural collagen levels.

This DNA test takes place in GENEU's swanky store in London's Mayfair. It's like a cross between a five-star spa and a spaceship. A GENEU scientist talks you through the process while you enjoy a glass of herbal tea or champagne. Then you're led to the out-of-this-world testing pods by your PhD-qualified scientist. The whole thing is quick, easy and hassle free. DNA is collected with a simple mouth swab and because of GENEU's revolutionary microchip technology developed by Imperial College London, everything can be screened right then and there, without the need for a huge lab. Results take approximately 30 minutes to process. You can take a jaunt around Bond Street's shops before returning to hear the lowdown on your skin. Science, not guesswork, then provides an intelligent skincare solution. The anti-ageing personalised serums deliver the best combination of active ingredients at the right concentration optimised to your DNA. Wow, just wow.

*81% felt that their overall facial appearance had improved**

*INDEPENDENT CLINICAL TRIALS WITH GROUPS OF 86 PARTICIPANTS, OVER 12 WEEKS.



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ENTRIES MUST BE SUBMITTED BY 30 SEPTEMBER 2015. WINNERS WILL BE CONTACTED BY 9 OCTOBER, 2015. NOT TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANY OTHER OFFERS, TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY.

GENEU Mayfair, London, 020 7499 7161 GENEU.com @GENEUbeauty

My close-up Kate Upton

The model and actress on golden bikinis, dirty martinis and pet ponies. By Katie Thomas



I've been using Bobbi Brown's products since I was little, when I'd steal my mother's. My favourites now are the Intensive Skin Serum, the Pot Rouge Blushed Rose and the Smokey Eye Mascara.

Growing up, I wanted to be a professional horse rider. It's like therapy; I love going into the barn and just being with my horse, Roanie Pony.





My Starbucks order is a flat white.

When I was younger, I always wanted to be Hilary Duff or Dakota Fanning.



My Top Tipples



If I'm headed to a bar, I'll have a dirty martini.



If it's Taco Tuesday, then I'll go for a margarita.



The only scent I wear is Jo Malone Orange Blossom. It smells so fresh.

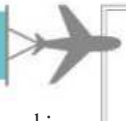
My cheat-day meal is so much sushi that I almost puke. Preferably from Nobu.



61k 9,134

My first post on Instagram was an image of me posing for *Sports Illustrated*. I'm floating around in a golden bikini.

It's hard to say where home is, as I travel so much. Probably the plane.





My boyfriend Justin

+



My boyfriend Justin

+



My boyfriend Justin

=

The last three people I texted



PURIST VS TOURIST



HERBAL HEAVEN

AMAN SVETI STEFAN, MONTENEGRO

It might be beautified and glamorous, surrounded by pine-clad cliffs and with a stonking beachfront spa to boot, but this Aman has another trick up its sleeve: third-generation herbologist Branislav Popović, who harvests 650 wild medicinal plants from the remote Montenegro mountains, before brewing the freshest potions, and elixirs. There is valerian to calm the nerves, immune-boosting syrup of jasmine or a reparative oil of sage and St John's wort for sun-damaged skin. Incorporated into utterly intuitive treatments, they work magic in the hands of the spa's brilliant therapists. *Double, from £3,234 for seven nights (amanresorts.com).*



ANASSA THALASSA, CYPRUS

The spa here is HUGE, with all the trimmings (like a jet pool with saltwater pumped up from Med), plus spoiling Ila treatments using natural oils from local flora: thyme, olive, orange blossom – even wild-rose stem cells in a signature facial. And the grub? It's much the same, with ingredients plucked from the gardens: fruit compotes, lavender-infused honey and marmalade at breakfast. Poolside, there's a very cool Synergy menu that doesn't skimp on portion sizes and makes you feel wonderfully zesty (lemon juice pulls out the iron from spinach, for example – who knew?). *Double, from £2,000 for two nights, including breakfast and transfers (anassa.com).*

PHOTOGRAPHS: REX FEATURES. BOBBI BROWN INTENSIVE SKIN SERUM, £39; POT ROUGE IN BLUSHED ROSE, £19.50; SMOKEY EYE MASCARA, £23. JO MALONE ORANGE BLOSSOM, £85 FOR 100 ML. PURIST VS TOURIST BY TERESA LEVONIAN COLE & MICHELLE JANA CHAN


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Beauty flash

BACK TO THE FUTURE

It's the cream of the rejuvenating crop. By Katie Thomas

LANCOME

Visionnaire Nuit, £60
They say 'Transforms the look and feel of skin on waking.'
We say Feels wondrously silk-like and makes going to bed all the more exciting – a bit like Christmas Eve.



KIEHL'S

Daily Reviving Concentrate, £36
They say 'Apply after a serum and before a cream.'
We say Yes, it's another step to your morning routine – but the resulting perkiness more than makes up for it.



CHANEL

Le Lift Eye Concentrate Instant Smoothing Serum, £65
They say 'Reduces dark circles, wrinkles and fine lines.'
We say Surely it can't work on all three, we hear you cry? Well, we're here to tell you that it does. Which is why we love it.





SISLEY

Intensive Firming Bust Compound, £162
They say 'Leaves the bust feeling toned.'
We say Because boobs need attention too. And the oat-seed extract in this serum makes the skin feel genuinely tighter and smoother.



CLARINS

Super Restorative Remodelling Serum, £80
They say 'Facial contours are redefined.'
We say A blend of Montpellier rock rose and narrow-leaf plantain is meant to reduce sagging, which means a younger-looking face. If only they could bottle this stuff – hang on a sec...



DIOR PRESTIGE

La Crème, £250
They say 'Skin texture is refined and more even.'
We say Plus it's made with 'blurring polymers' that, straight away, make skin look perfect. So good we're showing it to you a month early.



ESTEE LAUDER

New Dimension Expert Liquid Tape, £46
They say 'Gives a sculpted, lifted look around the eyes.'
We say Cheaper than a lid lift and quicker too. And that nifty applicator makes it a dream to apply.

GIVENCHY

Le Soin Noir Rituel de Nettoyage, £75
They say 'Leaves the epidermis smooth and pure.'
We say Simply massage the cleanser in, then remove with the clever accompanying Konjac sponge. Skin never felt so clean.



STILL-LIFES: SUDHIR PITHWA

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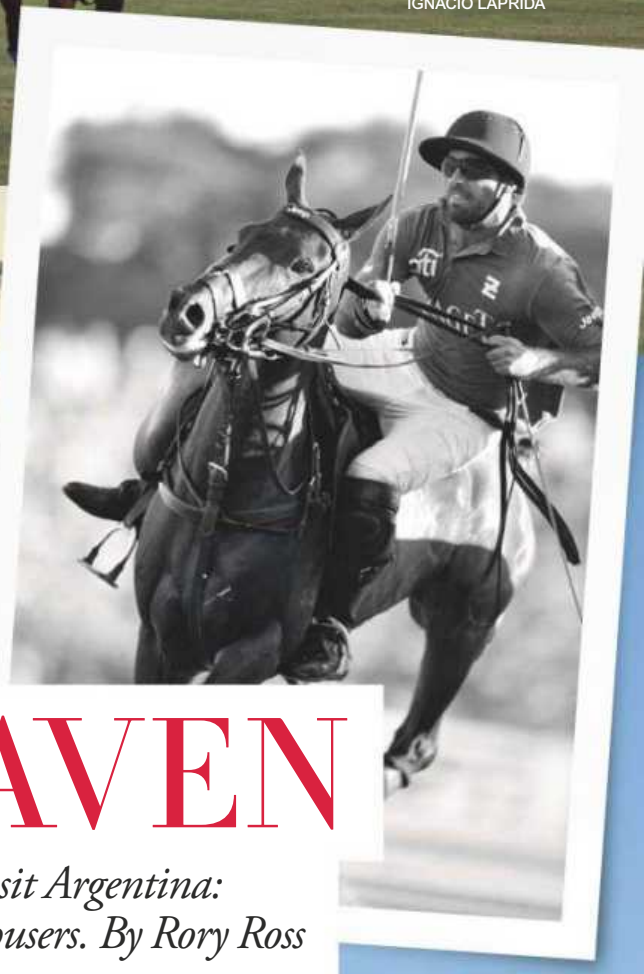
Edited by FRANCISCA KELLETT



CLOCKWISE, THE POLO GROUNDS AT LA ESTANCIA DE CAFAYATE; ELLERSTINA'S FACUNDO PIERES; ARGENTINE OPEN FINAL, 2014; GAUCHO WITH PONY; MATE TEA TIME; MIRAMAR'S UP-AND-COMING IGNACIO LAPRIDA







PHOTOGRAPHS: RAFAEL ESTEFANIA, TONY RAMIREZ/IMAGES OF POLO

POLO HEAVEN

There are many great reasons to visit Argentina: wine, food and hotties in tight white trousers. By Rory Ross







THE LA DOLFINA TEAM PLAYING IN LAST YEAR'S ARGENTINE OPEN





TOP, ADOLFO CAMBIASO. *ABOVE*, A SPECTATOR AT THE ARGENTINE OPEN, 2014



PEPE SANTAMARINA



Thock! The ball arced, prompting a small cavalry charge. The muffled thud of hooves and the cries of players contended with the jangle of riding tack. The charge proved inconclusive. The players paused, huddled and then... *Thock!* Off they charged again, until, in a sublime moment that was part skill and part magic, a goal was scored.

I was watching the final of the Hurlingham Open polo tournament just outside Buenos Aires: Ellerstina vs La Dolfina. Polo doesn't get any better than this. Ellerstina – the team originally created by Kerry Packer and Gonzalo Pieres – has two 10-goal players. La Dolfina, the vehicle for the sumptuously gifted Adolfo Cambiaso, is the only 40-goal outfit in the world.

'All four Dolfina players – Cambiaso, David Stirling, Pablo Mac Donough and Juan Nero – have 10-goal handicaps,' explains Pepe Santamarina, head of polo at Buenos Aires' Hurlingham Club. 'Perfection!' There are only seven 10-goal players in the world today, and I was watching six of them. *Thock!*

Goals in polo look to me like flukes. Here, they bordered on the miraculous: the ball was lobbed, volleyed and hustled across the line from impossible angles. I asked Santamarina about Adolfo Cambiaso. 'Incredible hand-eye coordination. Superb riding ability,' he said. 'He's the greatest ever.' Cambiaso has scored three times more goals in his career than all of his Dolfina team mates combined.

They say Argentinian players are the best in the world. True, but that overlooks the ponies, the climate, the space, the grass, the peace. Argentina proves that God loves polo. 'Breeding conditions are ideal,' said Santamarina. 'The horses are outdoors all year. No need for stables.' Santamarina himself breeds on his own 65-acre estate. How many ponies? 'I have a string of 500.' *Thock!*

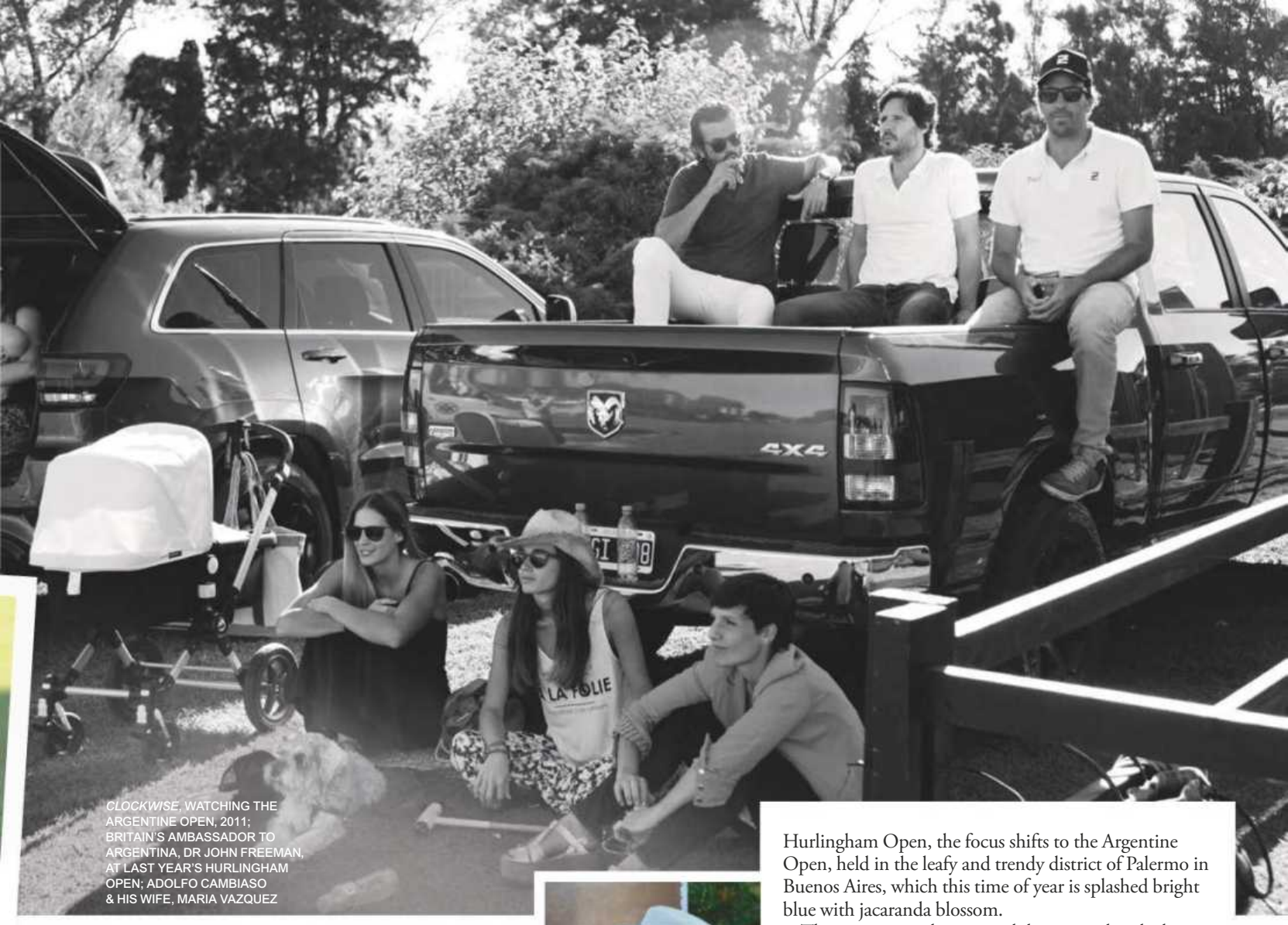


At the summit of the game, three tournaments form the Triple Crown: Las Tortugas, the Hurlingham Open and the Argentine Open. The action takes place between late September and early December.

When the British introduced polo to Argentina in the 1880s, it could easily have remained a niche colonial pastime, like cricket. But polo rode into Argentine consciousness on the back of gaucho culture. Cattle driving is natural training for polo ponies. 'Horses learn to gallop, stop, turn and push the cows,' said Santamarina. 'The lasso gets them used to the mallet.' Ah, so polo is eight gauchos chasing a wild cow. La Dolfina may be polo perfection, but to a cow or bull they are the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.

It's not a cheap hobby. With eight chukkas per game (two more than in the British game – a direct result of the abundance of ponies in Argentina), each player gets through 'on average' 20 ponies. That's 160 ponies per game. At around £130,000 per pony, you're risking a bloodstock investment of roughly £2m per game. There's no prize money. 'You compete for glory among brothers,' said Santamarina. 'You often find grandfathers, fathers and sons playing together. That applies to horses as well as players.'

I met Dr John Freeman, our ambassador in Buenos Aires, who is juggling Britain's stake in the Patagonian hydrocarbon boom with Argentina's attempts to strangle the Falklands. Once Cristina Kirchner shuffles off after the general election in October, who knows – Argentina might enjoy a mini-renaissance from its present weak growth, high inflation and dearth of foreign investment. Anyway, none of this detracts from the beauty, charm, scenery, architecture, weather, wine, food, and good exchange rate. What's not to love? The only downsides are the coffee, the politics and the endlessly kicked can of Argentine economics. Everything else seems so... seductive.



CLOCKWISE, WATCHING THE ARGENTINE OPEN, 2011; BRITAIN'S AMBASSADOR TO ARGENTINA, DR JOHN FREEMAN, AT LAST YEAR'S HURLINGHAM OPEN; ADOLFO CAMBIASO & HIS WIFE, MARIA VAZQUEZ

'We are spoilt here,' said Santamarina. 'Visitors fall in love with Argentina, and try to find an excuse to return. Ha! That's when the trouble begins. It's like the wrong girlfriend – great sex, until: "Let's live together!"'

There are encouraging straws in the wind. Argentinian food is diversifying from its traditional steak-based mono-cuisine. If you visit Mendoza, check out Siete Cocinas and Fuente y Fonda restaurants, run by Pablo Del Río, showcases of non-beef Argentinian gastronomy. Some chefs are even resurrecting dishes that the Spanish colonialists trashed, rediscovering beans, spices, dried potatoes, corn and quinoa.

Likewise in wine. Americans, Brazilians and Chileans are piling in, planning, building, investing, experimenting, making, diversifying and drinking. Malbec, the icon varietal, has been eclipsed by blends of cabernet sauvignon, merlot and cabernet franc. Wine labels to pick off the list are Lagarde, Zorzal, Kaiken, Trapiche, Renacer, O. Fournier and Mendel – particularly Mendel.

But polo is one Argentinian classic that is too good to change. After the Hurlingham Open, the focus shifts to the Argentine Open, held in the leafy and trendy district of Palermo in Buenos Aires, which this time of year is splashed bright blue with jacaranda blossom.





The estancias and country clubs emptied as the beau monde and friends of Prince Harry converged by helicopter and 4x4 on the Campo Argentino de Polo. Women dressed to catch the eye, the look classically hot-weather stylish – white jeans, hats, dark glasses and not a single spare pound. For men – jeans and polo shirts.

It was bizarre to find myself seated directly behind the famous Adolfo Cambiaso as he ate a hot dog with his wife, María Vázquez, the former model, and two of their children, while they watched La Aguada (a 36-goal handicap team) play Magual (33-goal). He even offered me a choc ice.

At the Argentine Open, you hear something very rare in Argentina: silence. For an Argentinian, silence is hard at the best of times – but for 45,000 of them to keep quiet for more than an hour represents a heroic achievement. Even the commentator seemed tongue-tied. Unlike the cheerleading you get at Guards or Cowdray Park, here the chap with the mic only spoke to read out the names of horses in the next chukka. They take it that seriously.

As soon as the hooter sounded full time, the place erupted. Music played, corks popped, asados sizzled, crowds mingled and the après took off. They take that seriously, too. *Thock!*

BOOK IT *For tickets for the Argentine Open, beginning mid-November, email secretaria@aapolo.com (aapolo.com). For further information on Argentinian wines, go to winesofargentina.org*

PHOTOGRAPHS: TONY RAMIREZ/IMAGES OF POLO, RAFAEL ESTEFANIA, RORY ROSS

ISLANDS OF THE BLESSED

Do you like your Caribbean cays laidback and British, or fizzy and French? Geordie Greig hops between Anguilla and St Barth's

FROM TOP, THE BEACH AT BARNES BAY; ISLANDERS OUTSIDE A CHURCH; A VINTAGE ANGUILLAN STAMP; A SIGN FOR CARIB BEER







I should admit that 'Anguilla' meant very little to me when I first heard the name. Was it a cry of pain? A Mexican dish? Perhaps a Cuban cigar? No. Anguilla is the Latin word for eel. And, perhaps more appealingly, it's the name of the best-kept celebrity secret of near-perfect beach life.

Sir Paul McCartney, Julia Roberts, Leonardo DiCaprio, Steven Spielberg, Robert de Niro... the list goes on: they've all been spotted – but, crucially, rarely papped – padding about on its powder-sugar beaches.

Anguilla is a minnow of an island, suitably eel-shaped and just 16 miles long and less than three miles wide. It is a 15-minute flight from ritzy, well-known St Barth's, but Brits don't seem to know about it. Which is strange, given that it's a British Overseas Territory, complete with plume-feathered governor and the Queen as its head of state.

We hired a car and found that 25mph was about as fast as you can go on roads with the sea visible at every turn. The island has a laidback Fifties Caribbean vibe, with goats tethered along the roads and Sunday-best families going to church services in Mahogany Grove. As we toddled along – and on an island this size it is almost impossible to get lost – we passed signs that could have come straight out of Enid Blyton: Blowing Point Harbour, Cedar Village, Isaac's Cliff.

There are only six traffic lights on the island and all roads seem to lead to the Malliouhana Hotel, the oldest and now best hotel on Anguilla; 'Malliouhana' is the name the Amerindians gave the island. This white-walled mansion with its lush grounds of palm and fruit trees has been refurbished by Auberge, the charming American hotel group that grew out of a small organic restaurant and resort in California. On top of a bluff in the west of the island, with sea on both sides, it is a sort of W Somerset Maugham fantasy country house.

The philosophy here is to love what is natural and make the most of it – quietly, modestly, but passionately.



SIR PAUL & LADY McCARTNEY ON HOLIDAY IN ANGUILLA

Oh, and spend £32m and three years to make the rooms bigger and shake off any pre-Forties stuffiness. John Vasatka, a quiet Midwesterner, is the ever-present general manager who has made Malliouhana seem more like a private club, less like a hotel. Think 5 Hertford Street meets Costa Smeralda beach club, with a touch of Tintin in *Red Rackham's Treasure* – the lobby has old deep-sea divers' helmets lined up in alcoves on the wall.

There are televisions in the rooms, but they are hidden behind white, palm-frond-detail wall mirrors. The rooms, in pale turquoise and white, are big enough to turn cartwheels in, and so are the bathrooms. The design, my curator wife tells me, is a throwback to Syrie Maugham, who was married to Somerset and the super-chic precursor to Colefax and Fowler. But the most tempting spot in the hotel are the two infinity pools with black-and-white-striped tented pavilions. It's as

PHOTOGRAPHS: FLYNET, SHUTTERSTOCK, GETTY IMAGES, ALAMY, CORBIS



GOATS AT THE ROADSIDE



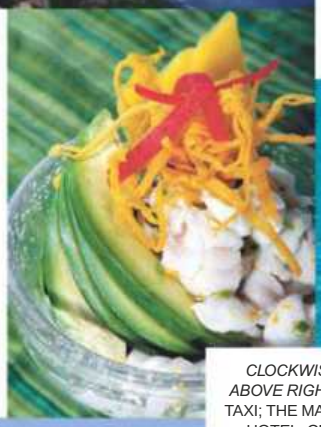
THE TERRACE AT MALLIOUHANA RESTAURANT

if *Downton* had gone west and Lady Grantham had hired Ralph Lauren as decorator, with Mr Carson serving dinner in his Orlebar Brown swimming togs.

Anguilla, by the way, is a rare thing in the Caribbean – a true food mecca, with more restaurants per head than Manhattan. We quickly discovered that for the full-on epicurean experience, the Malliouhana was the place to go. Its spectacular three-tiered clifftop restaurant overlooking the beach is presided over by Jeremy Bearman, who ran Rouge Tomate in New York; having achieved a Michelin star there for five years, he is now giving some Michelin muscle to the Caribbean.

The food was exotic and delicious: walu ceviche, flavoured with local lemongrass, jicama and yuzu (jicama, for those who do not choose exotic foods as their *Mastermind* special subject, is a root vegetable, and yuzu is an ugly sort of lime). More local options included crayfish, spiny lobster and Anguilla snapper, with added Caribbean twists of papaya-chilli salsa or gazpacho with conch. The eggs, the menu told us, came from a local farm run by 'Bryan'. My wife Kathryn, who wanted to go healthy while I was all for holiday indulgence, chose salads with local rocket, hazelnuts and – for the ultimate Notting Hill food faddist – kale, which I always remember my father telling me was for feeding cattle.







CLOCKWISE, FROM ABOVE RIGHT, A WATER TAXI; THE MALLIOUHANA HOTEL; CEVICHE & AVOCADO; PICANTE RESTAURANT

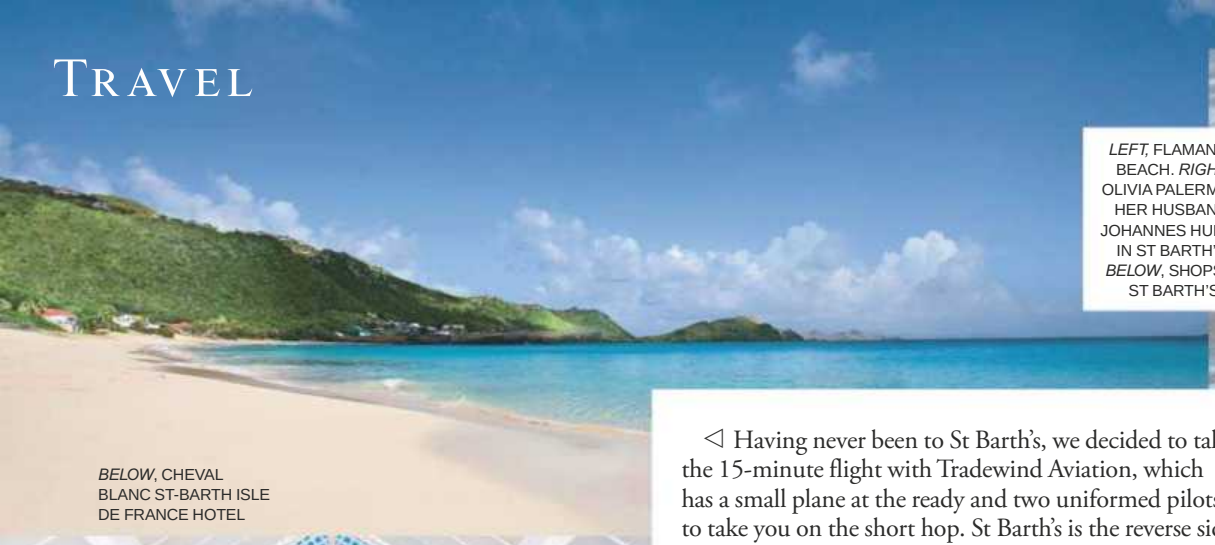
There's also a stunning Tex-Mex restaurant called Picante, run by a blonde Californian food goddess, where passionfruit margaritas arrive in jugs. The food was so good we ate there two nights running. Another place to try is Hibernia, in the north of the island, where a Spanish-French chef and his Irish wife have made Caribbean food soar to new heights, all amid Indonesian sculptures. They relaxed their no-bikini rule only once, when Naomi Campbell arrived off a boat with Robert De Niro and Martin Scorsese, but turned away Denzel Washington because he arrived after lunch had stopped being served. He was cool about it; they did not recognise him, as they don't most celebrities.

But really, the island's trump card is its beaches: silky, white, palm-fringed, empty, turquoise-watered, with no stones, seaweed or jellyfish. We could walk just 25 steps from the restaurant and were on the sand. The island has some of the most ravishingly beautiful beaches in the Caribbean – Anguilla is to beaches what Château Latour is to wine. And, this being Anguilla, if you actually want Latour, that too is available. But there are no brands at all, unless you count Lime (the local mobile network) or Carib beer. The small cafés and shacks on the sand are so good that there is usually a small queue; in high season, A-list celebs hang out at Blanchards Beach Shack for the fresh fish tacos and strawberry daiquiris. ▷





SCALLOP CEVICHE





LEFT, FLAMANDS BEACH. *RIGHT*, OLIVIA PALERMO & HER HUSBAND, JOHANNES HUEBL, IN ST BARTH'S. *BELOW*, SHOPS IN ST BARTH'S



BELOW, CHEVAL BLANC ST-BARTH ISLE DE FRANCE HOTEL



◁ Having never been to St Barth's, we decided to take the 15-minute flight with Tradewind Aviation, which has a small plane at the ready and two uniformed pilots to take you on the short hop. St Barth's is the reverse side of the same coin: great beaches, great food, but entirely different. On Anguilla, we drove on the left, we paid in US dollars, everyone spoke English and our heart rates slowed to suit the island's slow, slow pace.

St Barth's is faster and fizzier – St Tropez meets the Hamptons, with Euro prices, French chic, va-va-voom sports cars zipping about on the right and an all-white population. Roman Abramovich has a house in St Barth's, but he takes his boat to Anguilla.

We stayed at the Taïwana Hotel, where the sensible concierge told us that to hire a taxi even for a 10-minute ride can cost as much as hiring a car for the day. So we took his advice and hired a car instead. The chicest place was Cheval Blanc St-Barth Isle de France, where every waiter and waitress seemed to be auditioning for a film to be shot on the Côte d'Azur. They've reinvented French service – it was all smiles and serenity, sensational food and even a mint julep to make it all the harder to leave.

Anguilla was what I loved: resolutely Caribbean with two-table cafés and taxi drivers with black Lincoln Town Cars cruising at a snail's pace; Kathryn fell for St Barth's, with its red open-top cars, iced rosé wine in blue designer bottles and the fact that even the sign for rubbish sounds smart (*espace poubelles*, wouldn't you know). One has Carib-beer branding; the other Cartier and Hermès. One would be Miss Moneypenny's favourite; the other is where Pussy Galore revels in French chic. As the French might say about both – *vive la différence*. □

BOOK IT *Carrier (carrier.co.uk) offers seven nights at the Malliouhana resort (based on two adults sharing) from £2,755 per person, including flights. Funtime Charters (funtime-charters.com) offers boat charters from Antigua to Anguilla. Tradewind Aviation (tradewindaviation.com) arranges private-plane charters throughout the Caribbean.*



LEFT, SALMA HAYEK & FRANCOIS-HENRI PINAULT IN ST BARTH'S. *BELOW*, TUNA AT CABANE DE L'ISLE, CHEVAL BLANC'S RESTAURANT, *BOTTOM*





ST BARTH'S FANS ROMAN ABRAMOVICH & DASHA ZHUKOVA, *ABOVE*, & MARC JACOBS & LORENZO MARTONE, *BELOW*



PHOTOGRAPHS: INF PHOTOS, FLYNET, ALAMY, XCLUSIVEPIX.COM, 4 CORNERS IMAGES





GUSTAVIA HARBOUR, ST BARTH'S

)(Dorchester *Collection*

ICONIC HOTELS IN ICONIC PLACES



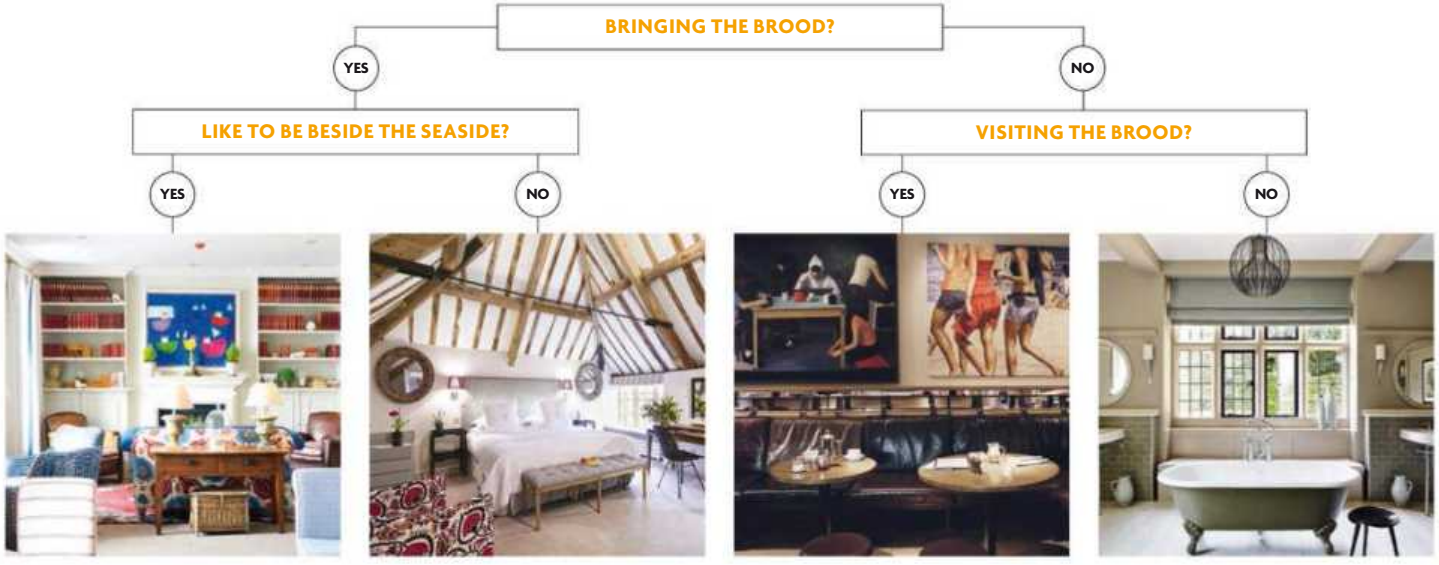
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Where to go...
FOR A JOLLY AUTUMNAL JAUNT



IDLE ROCKS
St Mawes, Cornwall

There are many reasons to love the Idle Rocks. There's the location, surely the best on the Cornish coast, nudging the water – so close you could reach out of your window and tickle the boats in the harbour. There's the decor, which is smart and cool and smacks of the sea, but with no hint of nautical overload – just clever touches like lobster-creel lampshades, seagrass rugs and bold, breezy fabrics. There's the terrace, where the great and the good (of whom there are many, for this is moneyed St Mawes) gather for cream teas and sundown Aperol spritzes. And the genius family touches, like the interconnecting bunk-bed rooms, baby-listening equipment and a playroom where the offspring will be *desperate* to go when you're enjoying that spritz. And the charming staff, and the food – Cornish cock crab, poached veal rump – and the all-knowing concierge, Sid, and the LOCATION. Did we mention the location?

BOOK IT Double, from £195 (idlerocks.com).

CALCOT MANOR
Tetbury, Gloucestershire

What if we told you that your children would hare out of breakfast and head straight to the kids' club without looking back, leaving you and your husband ALONE FOR HOURS in a huge, cushiony suite? Almost awkward, that. What if we went on to say that your energetic tots would avail themselves so completely of the facilities – bunk beds, two baths in the bathroom, pool, arts and crafts in the Playzone – that you'd begin to wonder what you are actually for? Well, at the Cotswolds' Calcot Manor you wouldn't wonder for long. You would simply... accept. And then you'd have a facial (an anti-ageing Aromatherapy Associates one), order some marinated beef fillet – cooked in the wood-burning stove and served with a chunky side of goose-fat-cooked chips – or just meander round the lavender-dotted meadowland. So, yes, it's ridiculously child-friendly but it's also ridiculously grown-up-friendly. Which makes Calcot Manor a minor miracle.

BOOK IT Double, from £199 (calcotmanor.co.uk).

OLD BANK HOTEL
Oxford

So the fruit of your loins, the apple of your eye, has gone and got into Oxford. O frabjous day, indeed! You imagine happy weekends hanging out together there, basking in the reflected glory of your child's genius while she turns to you lovingly to express her appreciation. And then the ungrateful little twerp refuses to give you so much as a lunch slot, let alone a whole precious evening, and fobs you off with tea. Well, go and stay at the revamped Old Bank and you won't give a hoot – the tea itself will be delicious clotted cream a-go-go, and there's proper fancy-hotel water pressure, marvellous beds and linen, and super-speedy room service – 10 minutes rather than the usual 'That'll be 45 minutes, modom.' And you'll be slap bang in the middle of everything, sandwiched between Oriel and University colleges, across the road from All Souls and Queen's. In short, a perfect base for stalking your wee darling.

BOOK IT Double, from £250 (oldbank-hotel.co.uk).

FOXHILL MANOR
Broadway, Worcestershire

Super-successful Dormy House has a sparky new little sibling: Foxhill Manor. Part of the 400-acre Farncombe Estate and perched atop a hill, it's all fields and cows and buttercups. And it's smart as a pin – Grade II-listed, with eight rooms, all a sort of modern-Scandi-country-trad hybrid, which sounds a bit try-hard but really works. There's no reception, no formalities. Want a G&T? Or some ginger chocs? The drinks trolley and pantry are help-yourself. Staff are chummy but not overly involved – it's like staying at a very smart friend's home. A friend who just happens to have the most sensational kitchen this side of the Vineyard at Stockcross. There's an epic tasting menu *every* night – smoked lamb, sea-trout sashimi, rhubarb cannelloni, chicken-liver parfait in mini ice-cream cones. It's brave but not over the top. And if you decide, 'Sod this, I just want an omelette,' the chef will make 'whatever you fancy, wherever you fancy it'.

BOOK IT Double, from £295 (mrandmrssmith.com).

WORDS: KATE REARDON, EMILIE McMEEKAN, SOPHIE GOODWIN, FRANCISCA KELLETT


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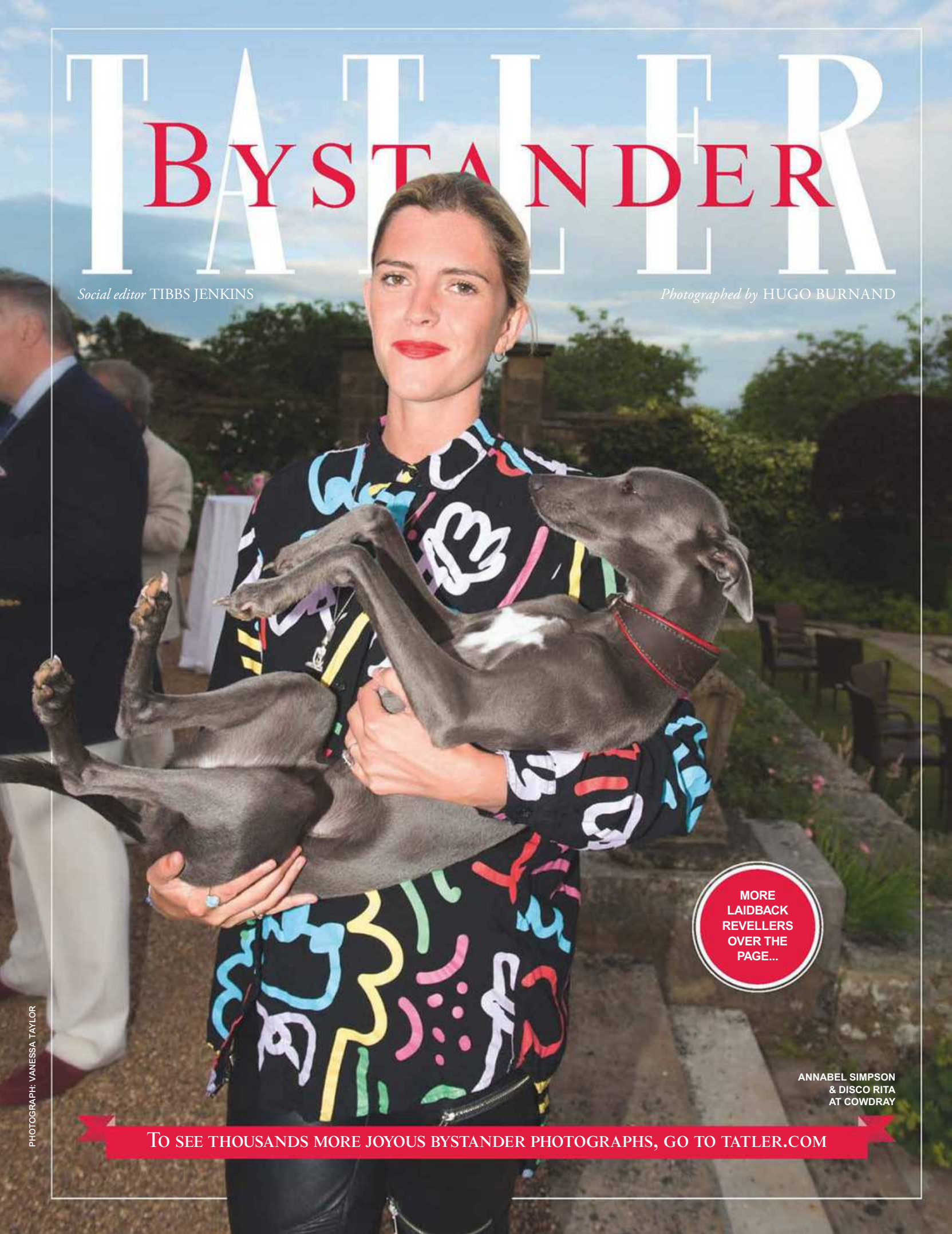
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www.grayandfarrar.com

TATLER BYSTANDER

Social editor TIBBS JENKINS

Photographed by HUGO BURNAND



MORE LAIDBACK REVELLERS OVER THE PAGE...

ANNABEL SIMPSON & DISCO RITA AT COWDRAY

PHOTOGRAPH: VANESSA TAYLOR

TO SEE THOUSANDS MORE JOYOUS BYSTANDER PHOTOGRAPHS, GO TO TATLER.COM



CLEMMIE HANBURY & JOHN KENT



KERRY FINE



BIANCA JAGGER, VISCOUNT COWDRAY & ALICIA CASTRO

GRAND DESIGNS

Celebrating Cowdray's comeback

There were saucy chuckles as **Clemmie Hanbury** and **John Kent** kept inviting other guests to join them upstairs at Cowdray House and check out the bedrooms. But they had good reason: the gathering was held in honour of the West Sussex landmark's reopening following a total refurbishment. And one particular guest was terribly anxious to check out the firmness of the mattresses – **Annabel Simpson**. She's getting married at Cowdray later this year...

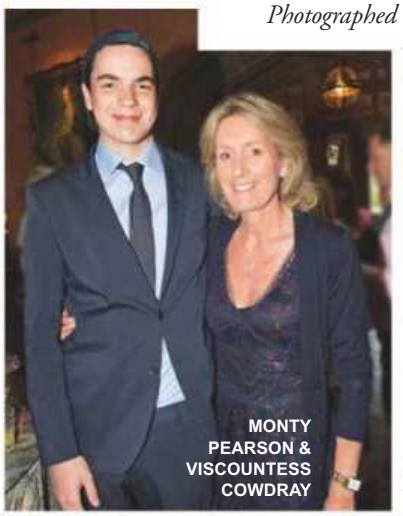
Photographed by VANESSA TAYLOR



Richard and Xan Northcott



KENNEY JONES & EDINA RONAY



MONTY PEARSON & VISCOUNTESS COWDRAY



DICK KRIES, JOSE FONSECA & MELANIE VERE NICOLL



ANGELIQUE SKILLMAN & HUGH MACKAY

TATLER'S MISSED CONNECTIONS

Are you crushing right now? We're here to help with the Sloanes that slipped away...

For the boy with the big hair drinking Jägerbombs at the Oystercatcher in August. You asked me back to Robbie Love's to help you turn down that upturned collar on your Jack Wills shirt ;), but I had to go home. FML. Come find me at 151. ***Messy blonde***

Arabella, I met you five years ago on my gap year in Peru. You were from Parsons Green. I was from Fulham. Remember me? I was wearing Fisherman trousers and you'd just had your nose pierced. I think about you every day. Perhaps you lost my number? *Henry*

The way you cast off up at Helmsdale this summer simply made my knees turn to jelly. And as you reeled in your fifth salmon, I practically died. They do say there are plenty more fish in the sea, but I think you're the only catch for me. Please let me be your fly. ***Your friend's wife***

To the MILF at Fourth of June. You were wearing beige Tod's and had a Brora rug. I complimented you on your black Lab, and you offered me some camembert. You may have four children, but I really think you're the ultimate fetish. Fancy catching *The Graduate* sometime? *Seductive scholar*

Does anyone know the recently qualified yoga instructor I met in Kassiopi? She's all brown and bendy, but I can't find her on Facebook. Think she said she went to Edinburgh? ***Hopelessly lost***

I always see you at the Beaufort Hunt, and really like the way you sit in your saddle. I gave you a sausage roll once, but I'd like to give you more. *A dedicated steed*

You get on the number 22 just outside the Curzon on the KR daily. Once you commented on my noisy iPod, but mainly you're engrossed in Instagram. I wish you'd give me a 'Like'. We could share headphones and listen to Mumford & Sons... ***Travelling Man***

PHOTOGRAPH: SHUTTERSTOCK



NINA WALLROCK, BEN SIMPSON & FABIAN ECCLES-WILLIAMS



Alice Robinson, Tara Henderson and Georgie Horn



GEORGE HENDERSON & DOMINIC FISHER

SCORCHIO!

A Latin-American late-fest in West Sussex

From the Peruvian pan pipers to the Copacabana cocktails, guests at twins **Felix** and **Atalanta Henderson**'s and their sister **Allegra**'s joint 21st- and 18th-birthday parties were transported to South America – without having to travel further than West Sussex. The affair kicked off with an Andean banquet and ended up with a full-blown carnival as grandfathers, godfathers and fathers took to the dancefloor, along with the youth. Fuelled by alcoholic ice-cream bars, they partied all night – leaving the coaches on standby to deliver the guests back to London totally empty. *Arriba!*

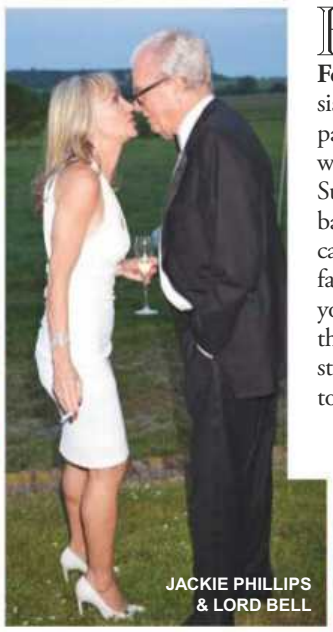
Photographed by PIERS ALLARDYCE



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LADY TIDBURY



OLIVIA & HUGO VON HALLE



PRINCE HARRY & JAKE WARREN

RULES FOR RULERS

Everyone's a winner at Royal Ascot

There are strict rules at Royal Ascot, part of the QIPCO British Champions Series, particularly for the Royal Enclosure: the diameter of a lady's headpiece must be no less than 4 inches; dress straps must be more than an inch; and, as **Charlotte Griffiths** discovered, skirts can't be too short. She was dispatched to the on-site tailor, who quickly tacked on a sash of lace. But one diktat – 'Children under 12 are not allowed to enter the Winners' Enclosure' – was not upheld; they bent the rules for the adorable eight-year-old **Mohammed bin Ahmed Jaber Al Harbi**. Under the watchful eyes of his father **'AJ' Al Harbi**'s pals, **Sheikh Mohammed of Dubai**, **Crown Prince Hamdan** and **Princess Haya of Jordan**, he congratulated **Graham Lee**, who won the Gold Cup on Trip To Paris for **Ed Dunlop** – and said hello to **the Queen**. He'll go far.



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SUZI & TREVOR SWETE



ZARA DELANEY, ALEXANDER & MARY CRESWELL & DAVID DELANEY



WASFI KANI

RAISING THE ROOF

Fans of Fiddler flock to Grange Park

This year's Grange Park Opera production of *Fiddler on the Roof* was on song – not surprising, as the patron was none other than *Fiddler* super-fan **Dame Vivien Duffield**. She wooed the organiser **Wasfi Kani** herself, winning her over with a perfectly turned-out soufflé supper and a declaration that she had loved that musical forever. Sadly, there was no soufflé on gala night, so **William Dalrymple**, **Raymond Blanc** and **Lord Heseltine** found themselves tucking into grilled asparagus and Cornish seabass instead.

Photographed by DAFYDD JONES



NEVILLE CONRAD



ELIANE FATTAL & DAME VIVIEN DUFFIELD



Peter Bevan and Christopher Rees



OLIVIA FRASER



GUY ASHTON



DAVID BUCHLER & NANCY DELL'OLIO



OLIVER BOLTON, FIONA BRATTLE & SARAH & TONY BOLTON

Lies to tell lefties

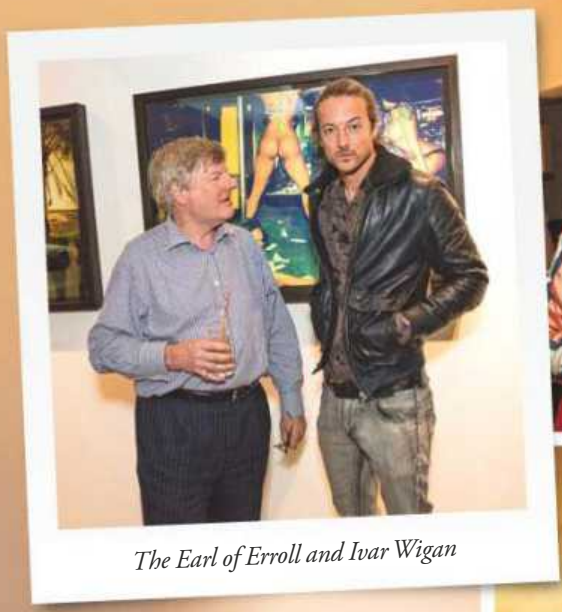
True aristocrats have a really long, blue tongue

This is why they always smile with their mouths closed. Actually, this is how the term 'Oxbridge Blues' derives, from their audiences gaping in admiration. The royals don't, though. Because they're German.

By Hugo Rifkind, who writes for The Times



PHOTOGRAPH: SHUTTERSTOCK



The Earl of Erroll and Ivar Wigan



LUCY ROBERTS & SOPHIE MOSS



OLLIE FORREST, ALEX WILLIAMS & JOHN WILLIAMS



JOSH DE LISSER & SAM PALMER



GEMMA REYNOLDS & LORD JOHNSON SOMERSET

HEAVENLY CREATURES

Some very attractive art lovers

Ivar Wigan's debut solo photographic exhibition – capturing the guys, gals and good times of America's Deep South – is called *The Gods* and inspired **Idina Moncreiffe**, **Willa Keswick** and all the other cool cats of west London to drift across town to the Marylebone art venue PM/AM. There, the humble earth-dwellers gazed at heavenly-looking Ivar and his snaps while drinking ambrosial champagne. Afterwards, some of the guests stumbled up the road to the Groucho for a nightcap, which was where the holy comparisons very much came to an end.

Photographed by ALEX WILSON



JOHN LYCETT GREEN, PAUL ROWE & MO JOSEPH



GEORGIANA HUDDART & PATRICK BINGLEY



CHISHOLM WALLACE & JOCELYN CARNEGIE



PAUL-ANTHONY SMITH & CHARLOTTE CHAMBERLIN-TAYLOR



CIARA CONNELL



IDINA MONCREIFFE & MATT FIELD



WILLIAM PINE & NIMROD KAMER



PHILIP ATHILL, MELANIE DE BLANK & LADY HENRIETTA ROUS



ALFRED NEWALL & VISCOUNT GAGE



KATRINE BOORMAN & ISABEL BANNERMAN

GARDENS OF DELIGHT

...just part of Finn Carew's birthday celebrations

To catch a glimpse of **Finn Carew** usually requires boarding a plane to Manila, where he does something in property. So no wonder everyone hotfooted it to the **Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava**'s Holland Park garden when she threw a party for his 30th. **Sean Rafferty** – used to addressing large audiences on Radio 3 – gave a stirring godfather's speech, while **Emma Hanbury** made stealth inquiries into how many revellers would be coming to Devon for part two of the celebrations, a cricket match between the Hanburys and the Carews. It may have been Finn's birthday, but the home team won.

Photographed by PIERS ALLARDYCE



SEAN RAFFERTY, THE MARCHIONESS OF DUFFERIN AND AVA, LAURA CAREW & FINN CAREW



JULIAN BANNERMAN & EMMA HANBURY



Alice Helme, Malachy Guinness and Tyga Helme

8 SHORTCUTS TO A TWO-DAY HANGOVER

Your card behind the bar.

Taking drugs when you are over 35. Shame.

Drinking tequila when you are over 50.

Commitment-phobe ex-boyfriend engaged and pregnant.

First night out after you stopped breastfeeding. Your tolerance is at an all-time low.

Saturday lunch that goes on till Sunday night.

Any party that involves a tent and a Hanbury.

Destination celebration. We're talking abroad.



CLEMMIE ST JOHN WEBSTER & WOODY ST JOHN WEBSTER



ANNABEL ATHILL, CHAR FABER & CELIA LYTTELTON

PHOTOGRAPH: SHUTTERSTOCK

THE FAST SET

Goodbye to a Cartier great at Goodwood

It was **Arnaud Bamberger**'s final year of hosting Cartier's Style et Luxe at the Goodwood Festival of Speed, after an impressive 20 years. So his best pal and Goodwood host, the **Earl of March and Kinrara**, presented the emotional Bamberger with a car. How generous, you may think. Except it was, in fact, a miniature. Still, a grateful Bamberger popped his new Mercedes-Benz Streamliner into his own car, and carried on saying fond farewells to his guests while awaiting the arrival of **Roger Taylor** – one of the classic-car-competition judges – who was two hours late. Very rock 'n' roll.



ARNAUD BAMBERGER & EARL OF MARCH AND KINRARA



OCTAVIA & MONICA GREIG



VISCOUNT ASTOR & COUNTESS OF MARCH AND KINRARA



LUCY YEOMANS & RED BROOKS



NICO ROSBERG & VALENTINO ROSSI



JULIUS THURGOOD & LADY ALEXANDRA GORDON-LENNOX



LUCY O'DONNELL



Annette Mason and Roger Taylor



JOANNE MANOUKIAN, CARLA BAMBERGER & RAFI MANOUKIAN



THE EARL OF PEMBROKE



SIR JACKIE & LADY STEWART



LAURENT & CARINE FENIOU



THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH & THE COUNTESS OF WESTMORLAND

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1



Mia Ring £195

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2. Skultuna 1607. Established in the year 1607 and purveyors to H.M. The King of Sweden. View the latest collections of cuff links and men's accessories and shop now at www.skultuna.com or call +46 21 783 00.

3



3. Diamond Rocks has a stunning range of engagement rings, diamond jewellery and designer jewellery with over 1,500 items in stock and big savings compared to the high street! You can design your own ring on the website by selecting from thousands of certified diamonds. Buy online at www.diamondrocks.co.uk Visit them in Hatton Garden (strictly by appointment only) or call 0800 977 4855.

4



5



4. The Little Leather Box Company specialises in the art of personalisation to keep safe your jewellery, cufflinks, watches, playing cards and pet memorabilia and make lasting presents for godchildren to grandparents – useful for ushers and bridesmaids, as stylish prizes and bespoke commemorative gifts. Visit www.thelittleleatherboxcompany.com or call 01684 592179.

5. Roxanne Rajcoomar's affair with good bad food was the inspiration for **Goldie Rox.** Being too difficult to choose between her love of fashion and food, Rox has created a jewellery label that satisfies both needs and is guaranteed to make a statement. Check out her signature Burger ring and the rest of the The Pilgrimage range at www.goldierox.com or email info@goldierox.com

6



7



18ct Yellow Gold Byzantine style ring (POA)

8



6. The Daphne Signature Silver by **Du Maurier Watches.** Part of a limited edition collection of just 300, this beautiful, Swiss-made timepiece with its turquoise blue strap is the ultimate summer accessory. Daphne Signature Silver with turquoise lizard strap £440. Also available with light pink, hot pink, red or black strap. See the full collection at www.dumaurierwatches.com or call 08455 193074.

9



10



11



7. Bespoke, beautiful, handmade pieces all made within the UK. **Xanthe Marina** encourages customers to pick and choose from an array of gems, metals and elegant and edgy designs creating individual and unique jewellery that catches the eye and imagination. Call 07768 263198 for more information or visit www.xanthemarina.com

8. For the finest fake diamond jewellery and some real gems look no further than **Heavenly Necklaces**; the best-kept secret of royalty and celebrities all over the world. These gemstone cuffs are only £48. Call 020 7371 8268 or visit www.heavenlynecklaces.com

9. The jewelry label **elie** makes unique, stunning back jewelry attached to a bra, enabling the wearer to make that open back dress a beautifully eye-catching. All jewelry pieces are handmade in Switzerland and can be customized according to customer wishes. Visit www.elie-jewelry.ch or email info@elie-jewelry.ch

10. Balar Jewels, handmade in Jersey and inspired by their beautiful beaches, happy lazy days in the sun, sand on your toes, salt in your hair – a quality you'd find hard to match, every piece is finished off with their trade mark yellow perriwinkle shell. Available online at www.balar.co.uk

11. Madmacdesigns. Pictured here is another unique necklace at just £22 made using dyed howlite. Also available in other colourways. Designer Catriona Godson can also hold a party at your house selling her eclectic range of jewellery, handbags and scarves. For more details check her website at www.madmacdesigns.co.uk or call her on 01798 342902.

13



12



12. Genevieve Lau. Jennifer Lau, a Wall Street trader-turned-stylist, has designed a line of effortlessly chic jewelry that women can wear from day into evening. The collection, Genevieve Lau, is named after Lau's great grandmother and combines elegance and edginess with exquisite stones and unique designs. Lau suggests layering her pieces to reflect your individual flair. For enquiries: jennifer@genevievelau.com or visit www.genevievelau.com

13. STYLE NEVER GOES OUT OF FASHION. Cobra & Bellamy make affordable, classically designed watches conveying timeless elegance. Pictured is the Hunter watch at £99, retro in style reminiscent of the 1960s. Its square face comes in a white or antique finish with a second hand set in a stainless steel case. Here is a quote from Sienna Miller who wore the Hunter watch when she was a guest on Top Gear "Cobra & Bellamy watches are classic, beautiful and affordable, I love all of them". To see the whole Cobra & Bellamy watch collection go to www.cobrabellamywatches.co.uk or call 01736 732112 for further information.

14



14. Twists and turns, organic feminine forms and signature designs; the epitome of **Kit Heath.** Kit Heath offers beautiful, classic and contemporary sterling silver designs. Every piece of Kit Heath jewellery comes with a luxurious branded gift box and bag. RRP £22 – £250. Shop stunning collections at www.kitheath.com or call 01271 312029.

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15. Keturah specialises in unique handcrafted gemstone jewellery, designed and created in Devon. Each piece is individually handmade using Precious and Semi-precious gemstones, Freshwater Pearls and finished in Sterling Silver. Visit www.keturah.co.uk or contact 07908 060476 for enquiries.

16. JFG Designs Jewellery A luxury jewellery line by designer Jules Frkovich, made with only the finest quality of materials in silver shade Swarovski crystals in sterling-silver. Stunning and sophisticated pieces that give that glamorous touch to any cocktail dress. Shop at www.jfgdesigns.ca

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TATLER'S AUTUMN WISH LIST...

Fall for Fashion!

1. These NEW MONDO fully waterproof and breathable (guaranteed) Leather boots from **Welligogs** are functional and truly on trend. Keeping feet warm and dry with adjustable leather straps for varied calf widths, these boots are made for comfort as well as looking great! Price £199, sizes 37–41. Visit www.welligogs.com or email mail@welligogs.com

2. Trendy with an urban classic look, this **Jolie Lola** leather backpack is handcrafted with care and enriched with handmade accessories. Credit card holder, 2 compartment pockets inside, back zipper pocket, removable tassel (use it as a key chain) and velvet lining all come as standard. Visit www.jolielola.ca – www.facebook /jolielola – www.instagram.com/jolie_lola – www.trovea.com/jolie-lola for more information.

3. Luxurious leathers in fabulous colours makes **Fioriblu**'s latest range of Italian handbags and accessories extremely desirable. With elegant designs uncluttered by excess details and at great prices, they have something for everyone. To complete an outfit whether going to the office or out to a party visit www.Fioriblu.co.uk or email Enquiry@Fioriblu.co.uk

4. Rawhide Co is known for its exquisite coats and jackets in suede and lambskin shearling. Their gorgeous, shockingly soft and sensuous suede and strikingly beautiful lambskin shearling coats, jackets and gilets are beautifully crafted here in the UK from the finest natural materials. A perfect combination of English garment making heritage, bewitching colours and acute, confident design. They will become your key wardrobe pieces – so heavenly you'll never want to take them off. Visit www.rawhideco.com or call or email Kate on 07704 521225 or kate@rawhideco.com

5. These luxurious 100% Cashmere Ponchos from **Juice Collection** are the perfect accessory for every season! Whether for travelling, a day on the beach or a dinner party, these stunning ponchos can be worn for any occasion and will fit perfectly in your bag. Visit www.juicecollection.co.uk to see the full collection of colours or call 01531 632990 for more information.

6. Cashara specialise in a range of beautiful cashmere and silk blend knitwear and accessories, including reversible capes, ponchos, jumpers and wraps. Their latest collection introduces fabulous new styles in an extensive range of wearable, easy colours. Visit www.cashara.co.uk or call 07966 033000.

7. Blue Velvet the home of contemporary and Luxury footwear direct from the heart of Europe. Always one step ahead, they have established themselves on their quality and first-rate service. Visit them at: 174 Kings Road, SW3 4UP or call 020 7376 7442. Buy online at www.bluevelvetshoes.com

8. September Child is a British fashion brand, established in London, that provides you with catwalk fashion and cutting edge styles season after season. To view this amazing collection visit www.septemberchild.co.uk or email info@septemberchild.co.uk for more information.

9. Laurie & Jules offer a unique and eclectic collection of luxurious and stylish women's clothing. Gorgeous parkas, tailored jackets, hand embellished cashmere, fur and accessories for you and the home. The perfect one-stop boutique for elegant and timeless classics. View the exciting ranges at www.laurieandjules.co.uk or call 01327 860337. Use TATLER10 at the checkout to receive a 10% discount until 1/12/15.

10. Earth Squared. This ethical fashion accessories label combines elegance and quality with fantastic pricing. Taking centre stage in the Autumn collection are a number of exquisitely designed tweed bags, jersey scarves and wraps in a range of stunning colours and gorgeous fabrics. Absolutely perfect for brightening up your winter wardrobe. Visit www.earthsquared.com or call 01620 824392.

11. Claremont Clothing is the online clothing boutique for ladies who want something a little bit different that can't be found on the high street! Designed as cruise and beach wear, their range of high quality cotton coverups are also ideal for garden parties when worn with white trousers. View the entire range at www.claremontclothing.com or email sales@claremontclothing.com Free scarf with every purchase – quote TATLER at checkout until 01/12/15.

12. Mandarina Shoes: reboot for Winter with a pair of Mandarina's brilliant boucle pixie boots. Smart, versatile and fun – these will go from desk to dinner and beyond. Available exclusively online at www.mandarinashoes.com Tel: UK 01307 819488.

13. Get creative with **Snowman** premium down outerwear – Detach the hood, loose the fur, ditch the sleeves! Discover your inner chic at snowmannewyork.com and email info@snowmannewyork.com Use discount code "TATLER20" For 20% off until 30th November 2015. #snowmannewyork

14. Patrizia Prencipe is an Italian fashion designer. Her flagshipstore in Verona is also her design studio, where you can follow the creative process of her Made In Italy collection and order customised products. Brand's peculiarities are the mix of materials such as leather, pvc and cork, and the chance to exchange the parts of the bags, creating an infinite number of combinations. Shop online at www.patriziaprencipe.it

15. Cocoa Cashmere is a British knitwear brand, designed in London. Cocoa is proud of its established heritage and believes its British attitude is reflected in the brands contemporary, edgy and colourful characteristics. Visit www.cocoacashmere.com to buy on-line.

16. Rewind Vintage Affairs are dedicated to make shopping for vintage and pre-loved items easy and safe. Consign or buy your Chanel, Hermes, YSL and more. They pay more; up to 70% of the sales price. They sell most items fast and offer a free DHL pickup in the UK. Rewind Vintage Affairs can guarantee the authenticity of every product with a money back guarantee. Shop online at www.rewindvintage.com or call 07590 025456 or 020 7565 0886.

































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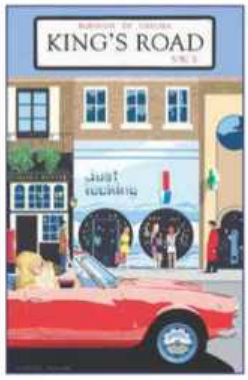


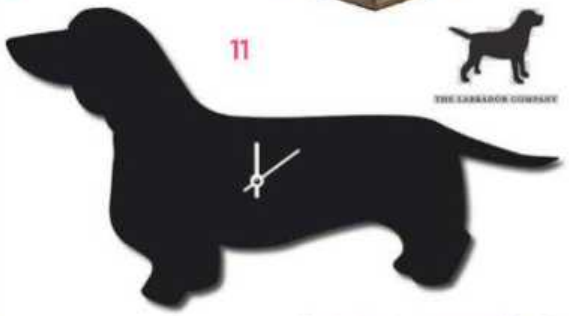






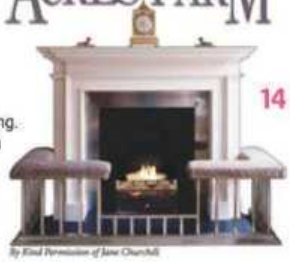














1. Revival Beds have been handcrafting luxurious beds in their workshops since 1983. There are 18 bed designs in the collection, which are all handmade to order from the finest materials and come with free delivery and installation. Visit www.revivalbeds.co.uk or call 01777 869 669.

2. Forwood Design creates original, contemporary furniture and accessories. Working with handmade designer shagreen, linen, silk and boa in combination with natural woods and metals, their designers create a range of high quality, luxurious furniture, mirrors, lamps and interior accessories. To view their complete collection, visit www.forwooddesign.com

3. Millbrook Beds. It's your best kept secret in the bedroom. Traditionally handmade in the UK for almost 70 years, Millbrook Beds are made to order using only the finest, locally-sourced, natural materials to offer the ultimate in sleep luxury. www.millbrook-beds.co.uk email enquiry@millbrookbeds.co.uk or call 0845 373 1111.

4. Designed and handmade in the Cotswolds, **Wagtail and Willow** are a small company that offer a bespoke service as well as their original animal cushions and handmade gifts for you and your pet. There wide range of fun and quirky designs are sure to brighten any home! Email wagtailandwillow@outlook.com or visit www.wagtailandwillow.co.uk

5. We are very excited about the imminent launch of the stunning new Albion wallpaper collection by **Juliet Travers.** In keeping with her recognisable style, the new range maintains strong imagery of animals and nature but this time, from the British Isles. All the designs are hand drawn by Juliet and made in the UK. Launching at Decorex from 20th-23rd September 2015. info@juliettravers.com 0207 376 2372, www.juliettravers.com

6. Love and Light's latest Indigo range are simple, stylish and incredibly chic. The tapered bases with Indigo ink stripes have been hand painted and hand waxed. Their latest range of shades are inspired by the rose, with the Hot Pink injecting colour and vibrancy. Check out their website www.loveandlight.me.uk or email Nicky on loveandlight.me.uk@gmail.com or call 07990 567572.

7. English Salvage. This striking 18th century rectangular lead cistern, features beautiful twin cartouche panels centred by figures depicting the seasons to the front and sides, including the date 1767 and the initials JW. This piece is believed to be originally from Chambers Court, (a substantial Grade II listed country house) Gloucestershire. Visit www.englishsalvage.co.uk for more information and products or call 01568 616205.

8. Cameron Design House was founded by designer Ian Cameron, who combines his Finnish heritage and London upbringing to create unique, contemporary and bespoke lighting. Handcrafted from their Primrose Hill (London) studio, Cameron Design House uses a combination of natural and man-made materials to create beautiful pieces boasting strong sculptural aesthetics and conscientious design. To see more of their beautiful range, visit www.camerondesignhouse.com

9. Must-Have Bins present a stunning collection of hard to find essential home accessories – baskets, tissues and jardinières, all hand made with exceptional attention to detail – they are just too good to hide. Call 08455 280932 for their fabulous 2015 brochure or visit www.musthavebins.co.uk A bespoke service and international shipping is available.

10. Pullman Editions designs, commissions and publishes striking original posters which capture the enduring appeal of Art Deco. Their newly-commissioned posters feature glamorous winter sports and summer resorts around the world, as well as the world's greatest historic automobiles. All £395 each. Call 020 7730 0547 or view and buy online at www.pullmaneditions.com

11. The Labrador Company is a British brand, recognised by their unique silhouette clocks of different dogs. They showcase a beautiful range of accessories and furniture including the clocks, cushions and chocolates in the shape of dogs all made in the United Kingdom. For more information visit www.thelabradorcompany.co.uk or call 01725 552255.

12. Firelighting Without Fuss. The award winning Grenadier Electric Firelighter is guaranteed to light all types of solid fuels fast. No home with a traditional fire should be without this modern firelighter. Order yours today at www.grenadier.co.uk or call 01829 741649.

13. INTERIORS | FURNITURE | LIFESTYLE. **Sloane Home** is a British interiors and lifestyle brand, specialising in luxury handcrafted products created by Master craftsmen. Call +44 7563 552 168 or visit www.sloanehome.co.uk

14. Acres Farm have been manufacturing bespoke Club Fenders since 1979. Their collection of traditional, classical and contemporary club fenders are made using up-to-date equipment but the methods of manufacture, selection of the finest materials and emphasis on quality are in the highest tradition of British workmanship. To request a copy of the ACRES FARM brochure to view their enormous range of styles, call +44 (0)118 974 4305 or visit www.acresfarm.co.uk

15. Jane Hamilton, portrait and figure sculptor. Her sculptures have energy and pathos; when doing a portrait, whether young or old, she approaches her work with the sensitivity and truthfulness needed for a likeness. To see more of Jane's work, visit www.janehamilton-sculpture.com or call 01295 750636.

TATLERS PARENTS GUIDE...

1. Blooming Beau is the place to visit if you're looking for quality and style for juniors, as their collection boasts an extensive range of high-end childrenswear, toys and accessories. Their commitment to only selling the best means that you can rely on them to provide exclusive and seasonal products for your children throughout the year. For more information, visit www.bloomingbeau.co.uk or call 01335 348100.

2. Winner of Best Children's Food Brand in 2014, **MINISCOFF** is made with great quality and organic ingredients, only using the best of British meat from high welfare farms. Really, really tasty! (Suitable from 12mths to 8+) Exclusively available from www.ocado.com for more information email angus@miniscoff.co.uk or visit www.miniscoff.co.uk

3. Maya Kids is the first online retailer in the UK to bring you the traditional hand printed 'dohar', an ultra soft three layered 100% cotton blanket. This versatile gift is large enough to be used as a blanket, swaddle, muslin, or feeding-cover and can be easily folded away making it perfect for travel. These dohars make a unique gift for any new mother.
Visit www.mayakids.co.uk or call 020 7428 9518.

4. Jam & Jelly Parties, based in Cheshire, are children's party planners. They will tailor your child's party to the utmost detail, ensuring that it's a magical day to be remembered. From hiring out their unique Lotus Belle tent, to catering for baby events, tea parties, themed birthday parties (and more), at a venue of your choice, they will take care of every element. They can cater for mums and dads too! For further information visit www.jamandjelly.uk or call 07969 229573.

5. Now in their 35th year, **Robert Stubbs** provides a range of stunning, unique and hand-crafted 1:12 scale Tudor Dolls' Houses. Offering bespoke commissions and beautiful intricate designs their houses can be found in almost every country in the world! To find out more visit www.robertstubbs.eu or contact us on email: robertstubbsdollshouses@yahoo.co.uk

6. Askival of Strathearn children's kilts are handcrafted with the utmost care and traditional technique; they even have a royal connection, as Prince George's beautiful kilt was made by them. Marion can also handcraft adult kilts, so why not get matching? Made to measurement and preference, and can be pleated to suit, they are utterly unique heirlooms. They can easily be altered to last the wee one a few years, and also for generations to come. Visit www.askivalofstrathearn.co.uk or call 07855 757790.

7. Pop-Up Pinhole Company. Teach your children the fundamentals of photography in a fun and exciting way with a Viddy! This unique Hand screen printed, DIY pinhole camera kit is made from 100% recycled cardboard is easy to construct and would make the perfect gift for any child or budding photographer! Priced at only £35 go to www.thepopuppinholecompany.com to find out more!

8. The **Little Remix** Fall/ Winter 2015 collection embodies the life of a cowgirl. Creative Director Charlotte Eskildsen has reinvented original Western wear, designed with an independent girl in mind, who has no qualms in standing up for herself and her friends. So howdy and giddy up, Little Remix invites all independent young women to embody the persona of the Wild West. UK stockists include Harrods.
Visit www.designersremix.com to find out more. Follow Little Remix on Instagram @littleremixofficial

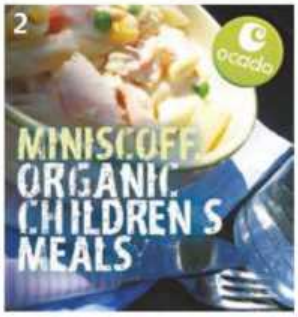
9. Fill your child's life with colour and fun from **The Dotty Dough Factory,** who make multi-coloured and glittery varieties of dough to play with, all from ingredients which are safe and non-toxic. Stimulate their young minds and encourage role play and learning – all while having fun! They make the perfect gift, whether it is a stocking filler, or even just a weekday treat. For more information, visit www.thedottydoughfactory.co.uk or email lezah@thedottydoughfactory.co.uk

10. Dazzle and Fizz Parties is a theatrical children's party planner delivering magical events for children aged 0-16 years. Clients include members of the Royal Family and the prestigious Harrods Lifestyle. For more information, visit www.dazzleandfizzparties.co.uk or call 01932 961422.

11. Saving Grace make beautiful and versatile, eco-consciously made nursing covers, utilising unique fairly-traded or organic fabrics from around the world. These helpful nursing covers are reversible and also make wonderful blankets for baby carriers/prams or for on the go nappy changes. For more information about their breathable, stylish covers visit www.savinggracebaby.com





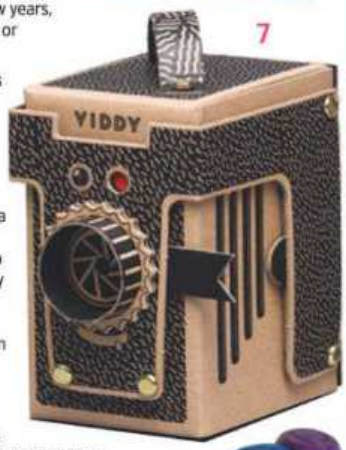




















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Nudie Snacks toasted coconut chips are made from 100% all-natural ingredients, starting with the finest slices of fresh coconut. A moreish alternative to traditional crisps, they're naturally gluten-free, vegan-friendly, and loaded with potassium. And now there are more ways to Get Nudie with two great new flavours: Salt and Vinegar and Thai Sweet Chilli! Available from Whole Foods, Ocado, and www.nudiesnacks.co.uk

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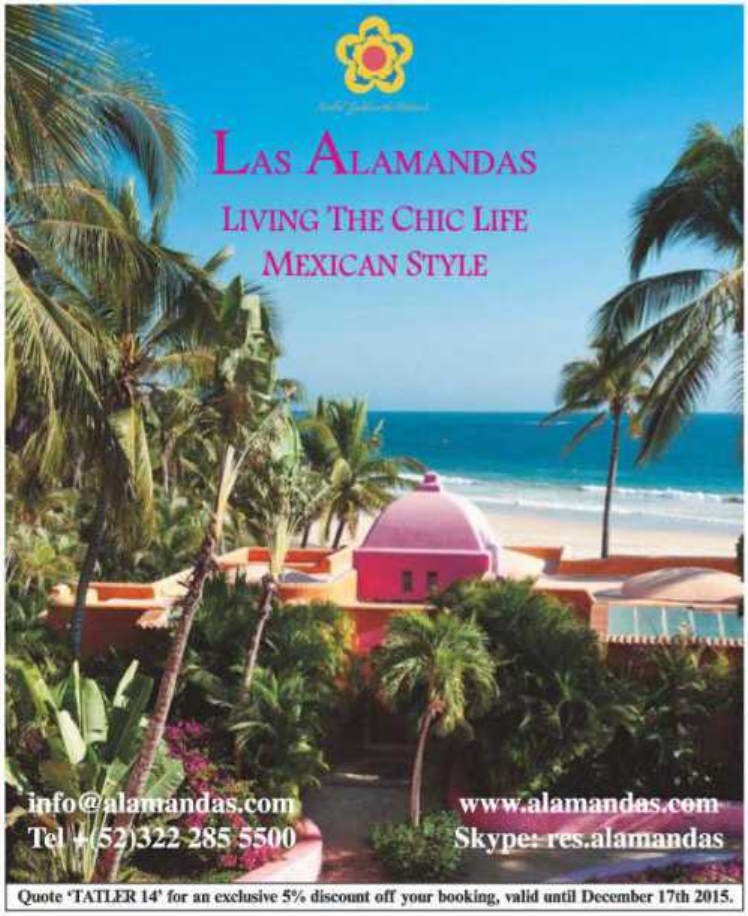
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PHOTOGRAPH: ROGER DECKKER

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WHO NEEDS A LIMO?

The days may be gone when you could pretend your Uber genuinely was your private driver but, by way of compensation, the prices became still cheaper with the UberX service – enough to convince many City boys and Chelsea girls to dispense with the Tube altogether. 'We have the best mathematicians and programmers making that experience as beautiful as possible,' says Clark. 'When we started, people found it miraculous that they could get a ride within 10 minutes – now they get really infuriated if they have to wait four.' An early investor in the company once described Uber as fulfilling his dream of using his smartphone as a 'remote-control for life' – which about captures it.

Still, with around three million rides a week (and counting), there have been inevitable accidents and horror stories, including a widely publicised case of a driver raping a female rider in India. Loud calls have come for the company to improve its safety record, while class-action lawsuits in California, Florida and Massachusetts are challenging Uber's claim that its drivers are contractors as opposed to employees and could prove hugely damaging.

And you don't want to get into an argument about Uber with a traditional cabbie. In April, 1,000 black-cab drivers blocked the streets outside Transport for London's offices to protest about the company (the immediate effect of a subsequent protest, in early June, was to increase Uber's business that day by 850 per cent). On 25 June, taxi drivers in Paris physically attacked Uber cars, including one containing the rock star Courtney Love. 'They've ambushed our car and are holding our driver hostage,' she tweeted. 'They're beating our cars with metal bats. This is France? I'm safer in Baghdad.' Berlin and Barcelona have already moved to ban Ubers (although a Spanish court has referred a ruling to the European Court of Justice, which could override national bans) – and the company's image has not always been helped by Kalanick's rather bellicose interpretation of the word 'disruption'. He's appeared to relish the fights with taxi-driver unions, municipal-transport authorities, safety campaigners, critical journalists, various regulatory bodies and occasionally even his customers. 'It's hard to be a disrupter and not be an asshole,' one associate told *Vanity Fair* for a recent profile.

'Anything as disruptive as this will come across this kind of opposition,' concedes Clark. 'Travis's term for it is "principled confrontation". You wouldn't be as successful as Uber is if you were afraid of confrontation.' Not that Uber's bad press has ever affected its growth: even idealists will in the end succumb to the lure of cheap and readily available taxis. And Uber's friends in high places have certainly helped the company in Britain. The day before I meet Clark, London mayor Boris Johnson caused one of his customary kerfuffles by telling a black-cab driver to 'f**k off and die' after an argument about Uber. Clark says: 'Boris is a great man. He balances well a city's need for innovation with the traditions that make it what it is.' Might Rachel Whetstone have had a hand in persuading him of the benefits of Uber? 'When you're as big as Uber, you already have the attention of a mayor. Our biggest advocates are our riders and our drivers.'

All the same, it's notable how many of the jobs advertised on Uber's website are for positions in 'public policy' (ie, lobbying). According to Richard Pleeth – a former employee of Whetstone's at Google who has worked at Uber's rival, Gett, and has now launched his own start-up, Sup – this is where the company is now focusing its attention: 'When you're a multibillion dollar company, there are a lot of problems that come with that, but when your valuation is that high, you can hire people to deal with them. Google and Facebook were both great at that. And now this is why Uber is spending a fortune on lobbying in the UK and the US.' The way he sees it, hiring people with connections is a no-brainer. 'Dave Clark can phone up whoever the hell he wants because he's Princess Beatrice's boyfriend. That's how these things work. Everything in the tech community is about who you know, and having someone who can get into places where no one else can is amazing.'

There is, he says, a certain Uber 'type' emerging and ruffling feathers on the London tech scene, which still likes to promote a craft-beer-and-ping-pong sort of image. 'They're all extroverts, they're all super-connected, they all went to a great university. They're probably all members of Annabel's and Loulou's. If you follow Uber employees on Instagram, you'll see they've flown to Val d'Isère or Whistler for the weekend,' says Pleeth. What unites the recruits I speak to is a fierce work ethic and an absolute conviction that Uber can solve pretty much anything. 'This is the most impressive set of people I have ever come across,' says Clark, who – let's not forget – spent the first 10 years of his career recruiting astronauts. 'So many future leaders of Fortune 500 companies are going to come from Uber.' The most impressive ones, he says, are the launcher teams – 'real hustlers in their early 20s' – who are given a credit card and a plane ticket, dispatched to somewhere like Lagos or Riyadh and told not to come back until Uber is in operation.

Patrick Studener, 34, a globetrotting Austrian who helped set up Uber in Nairobi and Istanbul and will soon concentrate on Eastern Europe, echoes this. 'If you go to the office at 11pm tonight, you'll find a lot of people still there working,' he says. 'There is a pool table in the office... but I don't think I've seen it being used.' When he elaborates on the company's future, you sense it's not simply taxis that gets him out of bed in the morning. 'When people talk about Amazon now, no one thinks about books. In 10 years, no one will think of Uber as a taxi company.'

SO MANY FUTURE LEADERS OF FORTUNE 500 COMPANIES ARE GOING TO COME FROM UBER

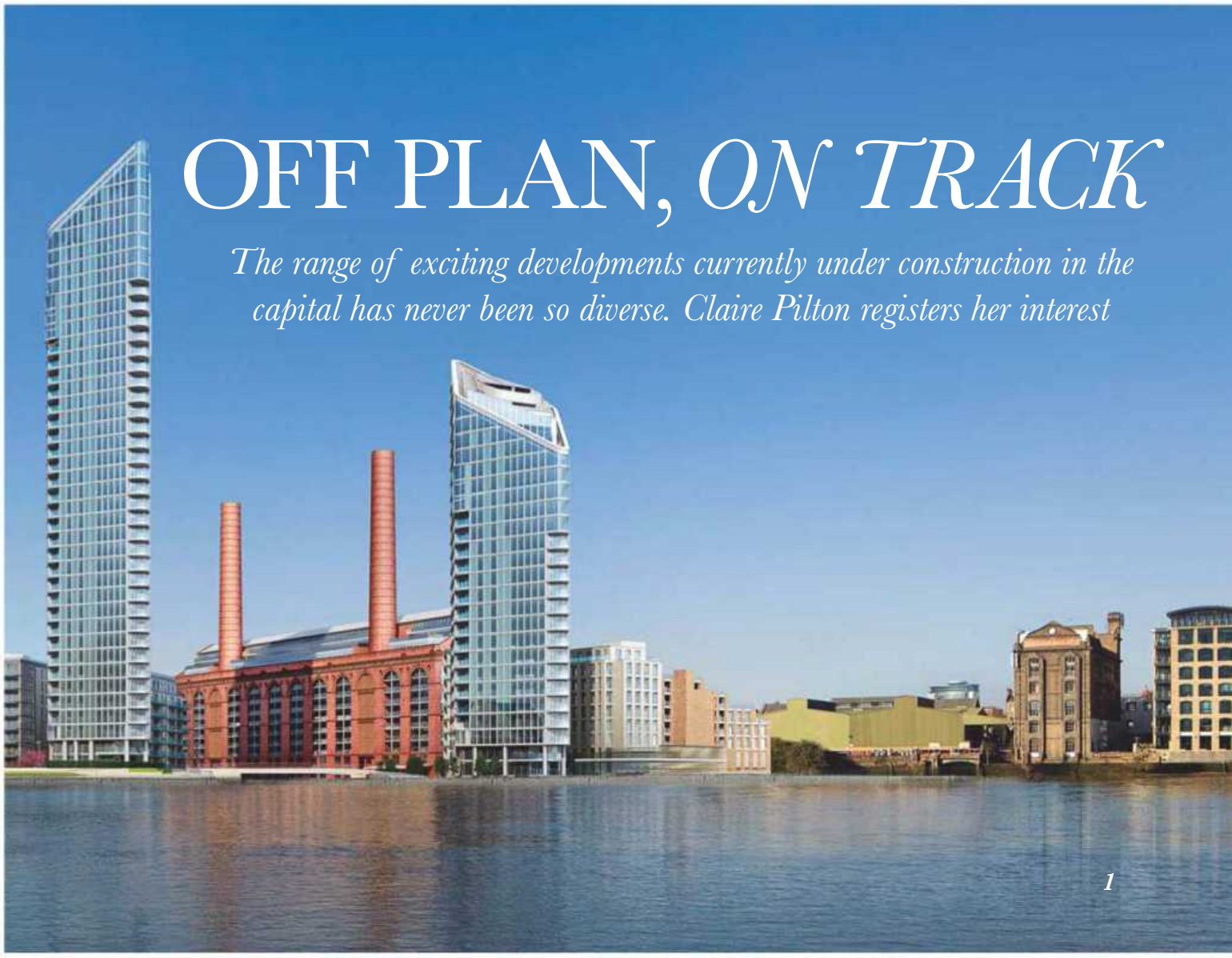
Indeed, Milo Yiannopoulos – a commentator on the tech industry who partied with Kalanick in his early days – argues that the Uber boss's mission is to create something far more life-changing than any other internet company. 'The technology he's building is not simply about moving people around in taxis. In my view his main competition is Amazon. They're both building systems for moving things around in the real world. That's one of mankind's organising challenges. It goes back to the wheel. Google and Facebook are just playing around with the internet really, they're not changing people's lives the way the washing machine did.'

When you speak to Clark, you can see why Uber types get so carried away. He conjures up the notion of an UberHealth service that could deliver inoculations door-to-door and save parents having to take their children to hospital. Or a delivery service that would allow regular drivers to make drop-offs in the course of their day, meaning fewer lorries would need to drive into the city. Or UberPool making rides so cheap that people wouldn't need private cars any more, thereby clearing up congestion (it's estimated that 30 per cent of all cars in traffic are looking for parking) and reducing carbon emissions. Or Ubers so cheap there would be no need for buses. 'How wonderful would it be if we could get people into Uber instead of buses!'

Would it be wonderful? Well, this is the world the new Uberlords are creating – and at the moment, there is little that will stand in its way. □

OFF PLAN, *ON TRACK*

The range of exciting developments currently under construction in the capital has never been so diverse. Claire Pilton registers her interest



1

It was built in 1904 to provide electricity for the London underground, but now **Lots Road Power Station** (1) is the last significant development site on the north bank of the Thames, along that central stretch between Chelsea and the City. Developer Cheung Kong – whose previous Thames-side schemes, Montevetro and Albion Riverside, were designed by Lord Rogers and Lord Foster – has appointed Sir Terry Farrell to masterplan this eight-acre site. Chelsea Waterfront, SW10, incorporates 10 new buildings and three new bridges over Chelsea Creek that will link the power station to water gardens designed by Randle Siddeley Associates. A waterside restaurant, cafés and shops will line a mall within the power station, which will also provide 260 of the scheme's 706 homes. Next to the station, with views to Battersea and Chelsea Bridges, the first apartments are now trickling onto the market through Knight Frank and Savills (020 7352 8852). They're not due for completion until mid 2017; prices start from £1.7 million for a one-bedroom flat, with three- and four-bedroom family apartments from £2.7 million and £3.2 million. Despite the ironic lack of a nearby tube station, Chelsea Waterfront is within walking distance of the King's Road, the river bus at Chelsea Harbour and the train station at Imperial Wharf.

Move east to Canary Wharf and within five minutes of the tube station – and five miles from London City airport – Berkeley is developing a residential unit, mixed-use scheme at South Dock, E14. Dubbed London's youngest landmark, **South Quay Plaza** (2) will include two towers; one has 36 storeys, the other has 68 and, at 220m, is destined to become the UK's tallest residential scheme. The scheme is also a first for Foster + Partners who is designing both the architecture and interiors. Construction commences in January. The first phase, where prices start from £490,000 (call 020 3675 4400), is due for completion in 2020, by which time Crossrail will connect Canary Wharf to Heathrow in less than 40 minutes.

Nine miles from Heathrow and a short walk from Richmond station, the view from Richmond Hill is such that it is the only one in England to be protected by an Act of Parliament. Here, London Square (0333 666 0102) is restoring and redeveloping **The Star and Garter** (3), a Grade II-listed landmark that overlooks the Thames and Richmond Park. Having started life as an hotel, it was rebuilt to designs by Sir Edwin Cooper RA in 1924 when it was opened by Queen Mary and King George V to house injured service men. Two years after the care home's relocation to Surbiton, London Square is launching a suitably exclusive collection of 86 apartments and duplexes. Due













for completion early 2017, the listed terrace garden and grounds will also be restored, while the King's Room, with its ornate mouldings, coffered ceilings and fireplaces will be the setting for an opulent spa, pool and fitness suite.

From the all but rural tranquillity of London's largest royal park to the super-central, theatrically charged marketplace that is **Covent Garden** (4): more than 90 new brands have joined this vibrant estate since Capco (020 7395 1350) became principal landowner in 2006. During that time, Capco has championed Covent Garden's relatively newfound prime residential status, achieving an average £2,850 per sq ft. With 28 projects currently on the go, Kings Court is Capco's largest to date; introducing a walk-way through from Long Acre in the north via Floral Street to King Street in the south it will, come 2017, provide two restaurants, nine retail units and 45 apartments for rental. Capco is letting properties more quickly than it can do them up, at annual rents of circa £70 to £85 per sq ft. Ranging from 700sq ft studios to 5,000sq ft penthouses, Kings Court will combine newly built contemporary warehouse-style accommodation with handsome Grade II-listed period office conversions.

On dapper **Jermyn Street** (5), St James's, SW1, the office space above British clothing designer Daks is being redeveloped by Dukelease to provide a boutique scheme of eight apartments. Named after Beau Brummel, the arbiter of men's fashion in the 1700s whose statue graces Jermyn Street, Beau House will be clad in a striking limestone façade with bronze detailing; a discreet entrance will access an opulent lobby providing five-star concierge. Launching to the market when completed early next year, anticipated prices start from £2 million. The 3,000sq ft duplex penthouse, which has 1,000sq ft of terraces, will be designed and dressed throughout by Oliver Burns. Bachelor boys and uptown girls with some £15 million up their sleeves should register their interest with Carter Jonas (020 7493 0676) and CBRE (020 7240 2255).

Alternatively, in the new 'destination neighbourhood' of Fitzrovia, Great Portland Estates (020 7580 1100) has eight penthouses at **Rathbone Square** (6), that range from £4.475 million to £7.6 million. With completion not scheduled until early 2017 (a year before Crossrail's arrival around the corner at Tottenham Court Road), sales here are nudging £230 million and averaging £1,886 per sq ft; over half the 132 buyers are British. Designed inside and out by Make, it is the largest of GPE's six schemes in the West End. Watch this space for news of its next development across the road from Condé Nast's HQ, aka Tottie Towers, in Hanover Square, W1.

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London *View*

By Knight Frank

On your doorstep... *Parks*

Live close to Londons best green spaces

The Wishlist

Londons most sought after properties

We speak to *Giles Barrett*

Knight Franks' Student Project

Welcome to London *View*

Fashion, music, food, film… whatever your passion, London is the city that never stands still. This constant evolution is what attracts people from all over the world, and that same sense of vitality is just as evident in the capital's property market.

While the headlines in recent years have focussed on rising prices and international buyers, the London property market has evolved and the picture in 2015 is more nuanced as price growth has moderated. May's general election introduced an element of uncertainty that dampened activity in the sales market and, to a lesser degree, in the letting market.

With a majority government now in place for the next five years and the prospect of a Mansion Tax having receded, some degree of pent-up demand has been released and there are signs of stronger activity. However, a recent increase in stamp duty is still being absorbed by buyers and sellers, which has cooled price growth. Despite the shifting regulatory and macro-economic backdrop, prime central remains as a safe haven for Buyers around the world.

New developments with best-in-class amenities are in particularly high demand and Knight Frank now has sales and lettings teams in key developments including One Tower Bridge, Goodman's Fields and King's Cross. On the rental side, renewed confidence in London as a financial capital – in part due to George Osborne's relaxing of the bank levy – is likely to underpin demand.

Overall, there is a feeling that London's maturing economy is fostering a sensible, stable property market; one characterised by steady not stratospheric growth. Behind this summary there are countless individual stories and characters that play their part in shaping this ever-changing property market. We've looked at a few in the following pages, alongside some of the top properties currently available throughout the capital (go to KnightFrank.com to see more).

There's our piece on the rise and rise of studio living in the city, and we talk to student accommodation specialist Giles Barrett on his property finding service. We also take a look at some of the city's best parks to live close to in our regular 'On your doorstep' feature.

We hope you enjoy this quick panorama of the capital's property market and look forward to catching up with you in the next instalment of London View.

Noel Flint, *Partner, Head of London Sales*
Tim Hyatt, *Partner, Head of London Lettings*

Knight Frank

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Charles House, Guide price: £430 per week
Knight Frank Kensington, lettings +44 20 3463 0303



Norland Square, Guide price: £650 per week
Knight Frank Notting Hill, lettings +44 20 3463 0320

Small *is* *Beautiful*

The Central London pied à terre is enjoying a resurgence. With studios and one-bed flats being snapped up faster than ever, Londoners are truly embracing the advantages of scaled-down living.



Whitehall Court, Guide price: £1,675,000
Knight Frank Mayfair, sales +44 20 3463 0229



Burnelli Building, Guide price: £795,000
Knight Frank Riverside, sales +44 20 3328 6542

Choose well and your space can punch above its size. With clever storage, big windows and good views, there's no reason to suffer from cabin fever. Restaurants and cafes on the doorstep can become your living room, and when there's a park nearby who needs a garden? Trading size for location can be a great way to live in some of London's most desirable neighbourhoods, but who's driving this trend?

The commuter's choice

Recent years have seen families in their droves cashing in and decamping to the countryside…or the commuter belt at least. It could be the reality of the daily 7:03 to Waterloo or simply an unwillingness to cut ties with the capital completely, but many are choosing to also buy 'a little place in town' with the change from their London sale.

The bank of mum and dad

Then there are the parents faced with having to foot high monthly rent bills for children starting out in London. With the choice between a crowded flatshare and a private space – albeit a small one – buying a studio has its obvious attractions. And with these properties at more affordable price levels in the most chi-chi postcodes, it's a great way to get the children onto the housing ladder in a good part of town.

Trading size for location can be a great way to live in some of London's most desirable neighbourhoods, but who's driving this trend?

Big returns

For investors, the bottom line is king. The relatively low purchase cost of studios and high Central London rents can combine to deliver excellent yields, along with the capital growth that the city continues to deliver.

So for many, small really is beautiful. Whether it's somewhere to stay after a late night at the office, a prized first home or a sound investment, scaled-down living seems to be here to stay.



Pavilion Apartments, Guide price: £1,295,000
Knight Frank St Johns Wood, sales +44 20 3463 0233



Ebury Street, Guide price: £595 per week
Knight Frank Belgravia, lettings +44 20 3463 0242



Warren Mews, Guide price: £2,850,000
Knight Frank Marylebone, sales +44 20 3328 6536



The Heron, Guide price: £3,950,000
Knight Frank Wapping, sales +44 20 3463 0226

The property wishlist



Bolton Gardens, Guide price: £4,350,000
Knight Frank South Kensington, sales +44 20 3463 0238



Antrim Road, Guide price: £1,350,000
Knight Frank Belsize Park, sales +44 20 8022 4034



Downham Road, Guide price: £1,550,000
Knight Frank Islington, sales +44 20 3463 0067



Ebury Street, Guide price: £ 4,975,000
Knight Frank Belgravia, sales +44 20 3463 0295



Cadogan Square, Guide price: £4,750 per week
Knight Frank Knightsbridge, lettings +44 20 3463 0235



Rosler Building, Guide price: £995 per week
Knight Frank Tower Bridge, lettings +44 20 3328 6540



Charles Street, Guide price: £5,800 per week
Knight Frank Mayfair, lettings +44 20 3463 0230



Britannia Road, Guide price: £2,500 per week
Knight Frank Fulham, lettings +44 20 3463 0237



Leopold Road, Guide price: £911 per week
Knight Frank Wimbledon, lettings +44 20 3463 0384



Lyford Road, Guide price: £3,250 per week
Knight Frank Battersea, lettings +44 20 3355 7335

Whether you are looking for a pied à terre in the city or a family home further afield, with strategically placed offices across London we can help you find your dream home.

Giles Barrett from our lettings division has picked his top 12 properties for sale and let across London.

Read his interview on how he helps affluent students from abroad, find and rent accommodation in central London.



Highbury Fields

Islington's largest park may be small by London standards, but it's an haven of green space for local residents. Surrounded by elegant Georgian and Victorian terraces, the park is mainly open lawns and magnificent avenues of plane trees. There's also the Oasis Café in the summer and the extremely popular indoor swimming pool,tennis courts and gym.



Highbury Hill - Highbury

One of Highbury's finest houses, occupying a commanding position on the south side of Highbury Hill and offering a remarkable 83' south facing garden. Guide price: £6,250,000

Knight Frank Islington, sales +44 20 3463 0067

Centurion Building - Battersea Park

A contemporary penthouse apartment with spectacular river views encompassing the bend in the river at Chelsea Bridge, with a short walk to Battersea Park. Guide price: £5,000,000

Knight Frank Riverside, sales +44 20 3328 6542

On your doorstep... *Parks*



Holland Park

Located in one of London's most exclusive neighbourhoods, Holland Park is a hidden gem that's worth seeking out. There's a surprisingly extensive woodland for this part of the capital and the park also features a beautiful Japanese garden, orangery, tennis courts and a cricket pitch. When the sun's high of a summer's afternoon and the picnic blanket is spread out, there can be few better places to while away a few hours.

St James's Gardens - Holland Park

A delightful Grade II listed four bedroom house situated on the southern terrace of this highly sought after and charming garden square, with close proximity to Holland Park. Guide price: £5,300,000

Knight Frank Notting Hill, sales +44 20 3463 0126



Battersea Park

With its prized riverside promenade, Battersea Park is a stroller's paradise. Marvel at the Peace Pagoda, take in the magnificent fountains and, if the weather is favourable, rent a boat and mess about on the lake. In this family-friendly corner of the capital, the Battersea Children's Zoo is a hugely popular destination.



Hanover Gate Mansions - Regent's Park

Situated moments from Regent's Park and Marylebone lies this excellent five bedroom flat with private parking. Guide price: £3,950,000

Knight Frank St John's Wood, sales +44 20 3463 0233

London's communities have always clustered around its parks. These precious green spaces are a tantalising taste of the countryside in town, a place where the sky and the views magically open up as soon as we step away from the busy pavements of the city. North, east, south and west, we've chosen a few of our favourites.

Regents Park

Another of the Royal Parks, Regents Park is overlooked by some of London's finest Nash architecture and has a timeless feel. Not that it's all about peaceful contemplation…the park is also home to London Zoo, the Open Air Theatre and a good choice of restaurants and cafes. If you're feeling energetic, it also has London's largest grass area for sports. Neighbouring Primrose Hill is where to head for jaw-dropping views of the capital.









Student Project

Clever students starting university in London this autumn, have already done their homework and met Giles Barrett, Head of Knight Frank's International Student Project.

Dockside House,
Chelsea Creek SW6
1 bedroom
£550 per week
giles.barrett@knightfrank.com
+44 20 8022 6171

The thirty-five year old lettings Partner helpsaffluent students from abroad, find and rent accommodation in Central London. "The children of the world's super-wealthy, let through us", he says. With access to over offices across London with almost 50 years of experience between them, Barrett and his team, let some of the best homes in the capital. So it's no surprise that in the last three years, demand for Knight Frank's international student accommodation has grown 75%.

Much of this is due to Knight Frank's range of modern lifestyle concierge developments on the river "which tend to be very popular", says Barrett. The apartments are secure and often have a gym, pool and river views.

One bedroom and studio apartments in the "golden postcodes" of Chelsea, Belgravia and Knightsbridge, are most in demand. Though Riverside (between Tower Bridge and Hammersmith) and Islington are also sought after. Average rents are between £500 and £600 per week though some studios let from £325 per week.

Those living abroad while looking for somewhere to rent in London, can find help on Knight Frank's state-of-the-art website which is in eighteen different languages. "Someone in China can look at a flat in London and read the details in Mandarin", says Barrett who lets many apartments "unvisited" by the student or their families. "It shows how much they trust us," he says.

Even more reassuring for international students, the majority of whom come from China, the Middle East and Russia, is the fluency of Knight Frank's lettings team: many speak several languages including Chinese and Russian. "We can ensure these students have a soft landing in London, says Barrett. "We take it seriously and we want to help"."



"One bedroom and studio apartments in the "golden postcodes" of Chelsea, Belgravia and Knightsbridge, are most in demand."

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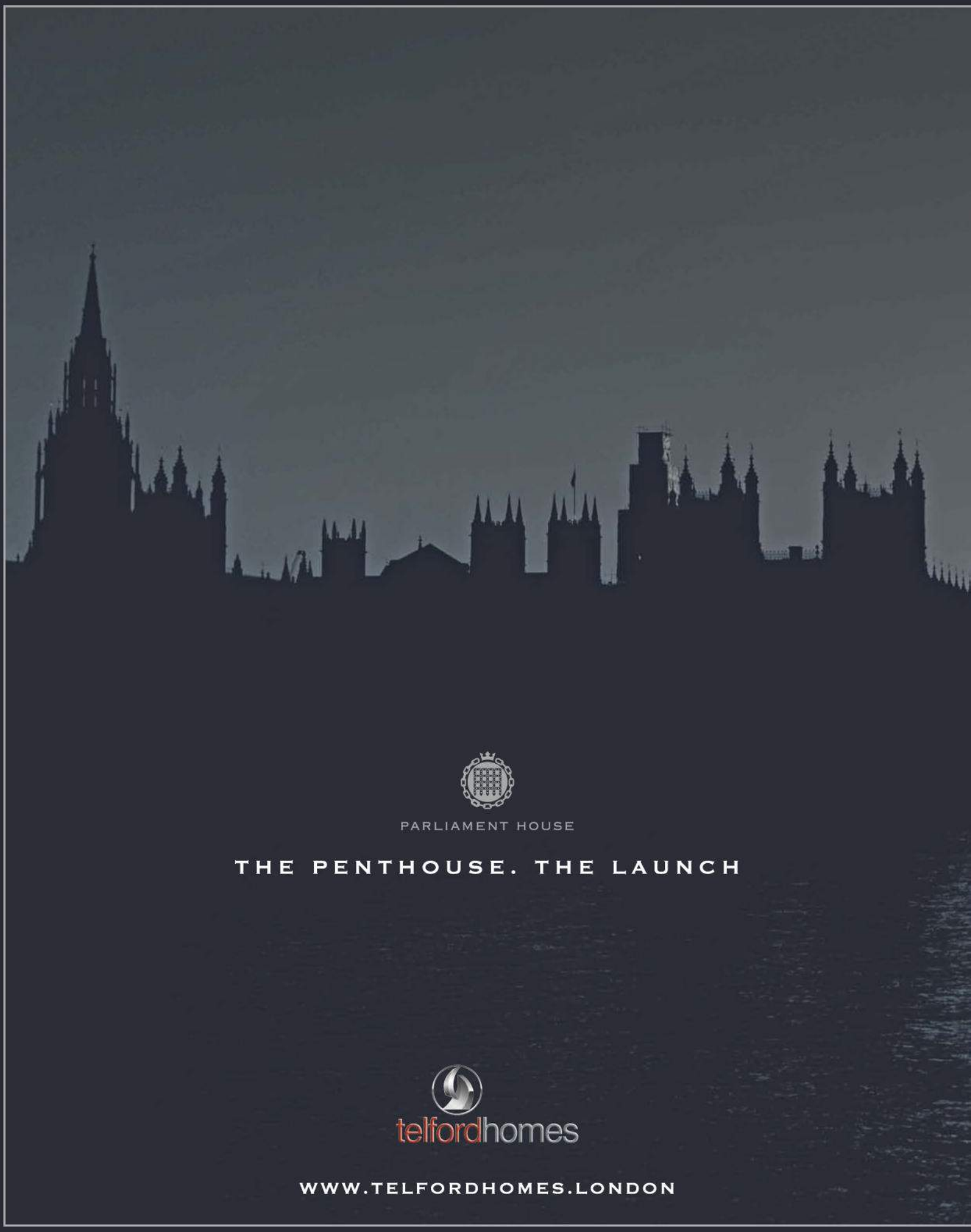
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MONTENEGRO *ROCKS*



Budva, with its atmospheric Old Town and numerous beaches, certainly has a lot to offer

The yachts are getting bigger. The season is getting longer. Claire Pilton discovers a choice of world-class coastal schemes along this rolling Mediterranean riviera

Lord Byron was right. The Montenegrin coastline really is 'the most beautiful encounter between land and sea'. With its mountainous backdrop, butterfly-shaped bay and 19 blue-flag beaches, the best way to appreciate this 200-mile shoreline is by boat; owning one is fast becoming de rigeur in what is still a new holiday-home destination where warships have only recently been replaced by superyachts. Montenegro is shrugging off the shadow of Communism in style. Next year it celebrates a decade of independence – and the opportunity to retain its ranking as one of the fastest-growing tourist destinations in the world.



PARTY TOWN

Budva's old town buzzes night and day. A stone's throw from the main square and marina, Dukley Residences offers a mix of 36 pied-à-terre, apartments and loft-style penthouses priced from €300,000 to €1,500,000. The developers behind the Dukley brand control over 80% of Budva's waterfront, including the marina, where proposed hotels and branded residences will make this the Monte Carlo of the Adriatic. *www.dukley.com*



HISTORIC CHARM

In the UNESCO-protected Venetian walled city of Kotor, unmodernised apartments start from €1,600/m2. Done up, they can achieve the best rental yields along the coast, reports Savills' associates Dream Estates Montenegro, which expects strong appreciation over the next five years. On the main square, a two-bedroom flat costs €120,000, as does a large one-bedroom apartment by the shore at Prcani. *www.dreammontenegro.com*



ONE-STOP SHOPPING

Currently the only buying agent in Montenegro, MRAY Consulting provides a secure and transparent entry into this still young but fast growing market. The company saves clients time and hassle by sourcing all available options both from selling agents and off-market, and presenting only legally and financially clean properties. It also offers full architectural services and furniture supply. *www.mrayconsulting.weebly.com*

THE SUPERYACHT SQUAD

The visionary redevelopment of a former Yugoslavian naval base in the Bay of Kotor saw the launch of the spectacular Porto Montenegro marina in 2009. With its sparkling location in the UNESCO-protected bay (it's home to some incredibly well-preserved medieval buildings and fortifications), there is direct access to the Adriatic and some of the best cruising in the Mediterranean basin. Porto Montenegro currently offers 400 berths of up to 180m, as well as 50 restaurants, bars and shops, a five-star Regent Hotel and 130 sold-out apartments. Next up: the Regent Pool Club Residences, from €409,000 to €3,720,000, which offer unobstructed sea and mountain views. www.portomontenegro.com



ROCK-STAR CHIC

The exclusive seaside estate and sanctuary of lushly landscaped Dukley Gardens is now complete and over 70% sold. Set on Budva Riviera's Zavala peninsula, the 204 water-fronting residences are cut into the rock across 36 apartment buildings. They and the development's dreamy Beach Lounge and Restaurant enjoy panoramic views of the Adriatic coast to Budva old town and Dukley Marina, just a five-minute water-taxi away. Prices currently range from €700,000 up to €3,500,000 for a three-bedroom penthouse whose roof terrace comes equipped with a Jacuzzi, shower and summer kitchen. *www.dukley.com*





BAY WATCH PIN-UPS

Lustica Bay welcomed its first homeowners this summer. Overlooking the Adriatic at Traste Bay, this low-density, 690-acre coastal scheme is as focused on protecting the local environment as providing a high-spec haven for residents. Integrated into the landscape and inspired by the architecture of surrounding villages, the initial phase will comprise a 176-berth marina with shops, restaurants, two hotels and Montenegro's first 18-hole Gary Player-designed golf course. And 300 LEED-certified apartments, 14 townhouses and four bespoke villas are being built beside the marina or on the hillside above. Prices range from €235,000 to €3,000,000. www.lusticabay.com



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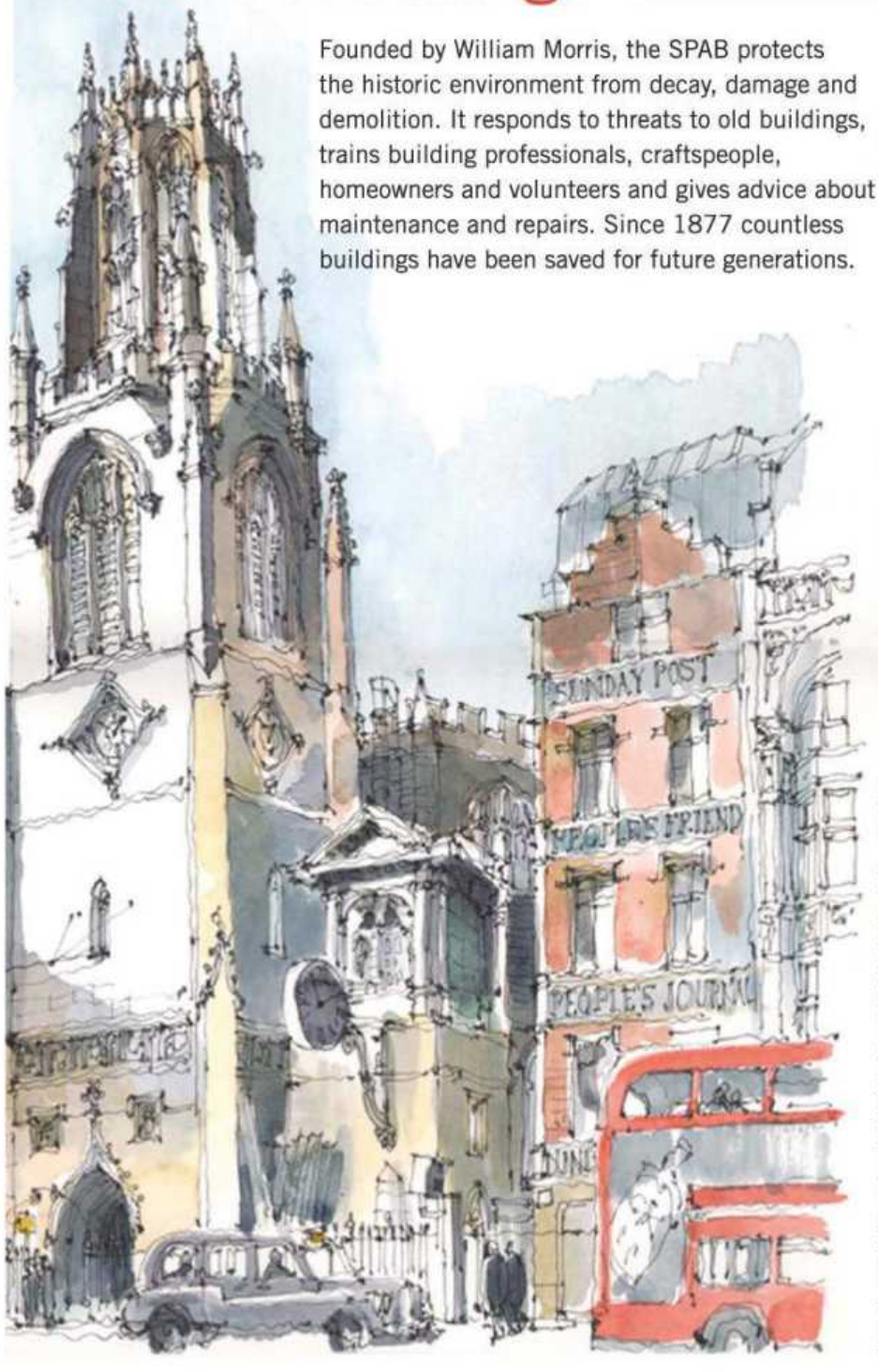




The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings

S·P·A·B

Founded by William Morris, the SPAB protects the historic environment from decay, damage and demolition. It responds to threats to old buildings, trains building professionals, craftspeople, homeowners and volunteers and gives advice about maintenance and repairs. Since 1877 countless buildings have been saved for future generations.



Drawing of St Dunstan-in-the-West by SPAB Scholar Ptolomy Dean

Information about maintaining your home is available through events, courses, lectures, publications and telephone advice.

To support our work why not join the SPAB? Members receive a quarterly magazine, our list of historic properties for sale and access to our regional activities.

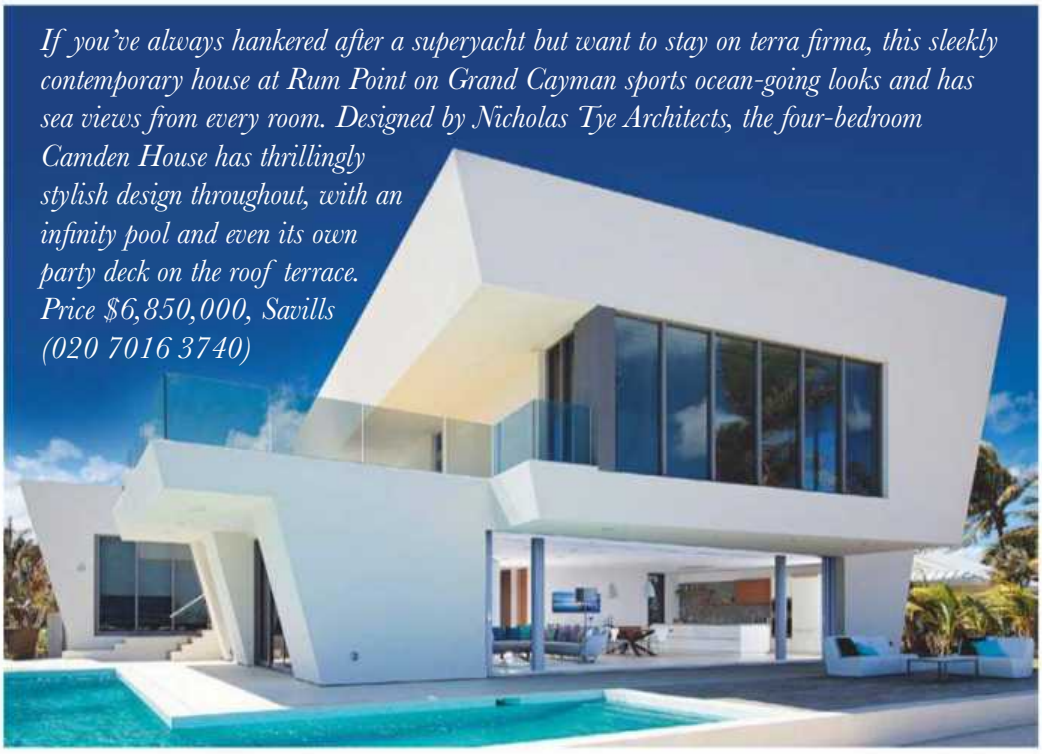
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PROPERTY

NOTEBOOK

Rosemary Brooke has the inside track on this month's property highlights



If you've always hankered after a superyacht but want to stay on terra firma, this sleekly contemporary house at Rum Point on Grand Cayman sports ocean-going looks and has sea views from every room. Designed by Nicholas Tye Architects, the four-bedroom Camden House has thrillingly stylish design throughout, with an infinity pool and even its own party deck on the roof terrace. Price $6,850,000, Savills (020 7016 3740)



PRIME OF LIFE

If you're hunting for a second home and are trying to track down the best international developments, then a new property website, Primenewdevelopments.com, is certainly worth exploring. It focuses specifically on residential and resort property, allowing developers to connect directly with potential buyers. The site is simple to navigate and free to use. 'We only charge a fee if a lead we deliver is turned into a sale. No sale, no fee,' says the company's founder, Charlie Smith, *pictured*, a former UK managing director of Sotheby's International Realty. Whether you're an adventure-seeker, a sun-worshipper or seeking a city pad, the site has each lifestyle choice covered. *www.primenewdevelopments.com*

Hidden gem

Tucked away down a quiet country lane at the edge of the picturesque village of Binfield, this Victorian house provides cosy, rural charm within commuting distance of London. With Heathrow airport a 30-minute drive away and excellent schools in the area, this five-bedroom house is a perfect base for busy families. At more than 2,600sq ft, there's plenty of space to relax. Outside, there are uninterrupted views across the surrounding farmland and three-quarters of an acre of lovely, mature gardens. It's priced at £1,250,000; for further information, contact Sara Batting on 0118 950 2341 or visit *www.sarabatting.co.uk*

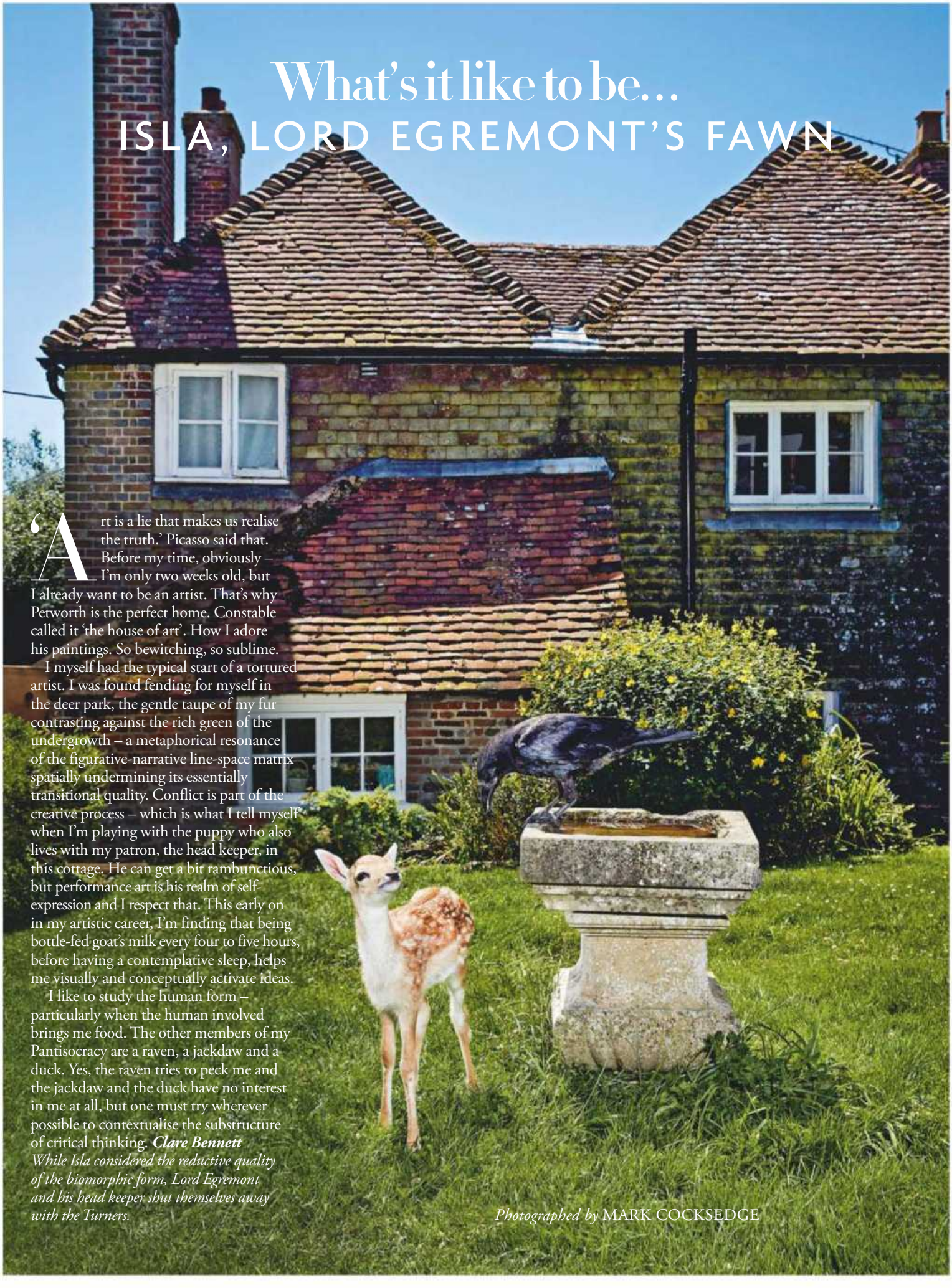






From Georgian townhouses to modern penthouses, Victorian rectories to neoclassical manor house, the UK offers a lively mix of places to call home. With interest rates remaining low and a flurry of post-election activity, buyers are turning to acquisition agents for guidance. 'The market has been unsettled and this makes it hard for buyers to navigate through the vast array of choice available,' says Charlie Wells, managing director of buying agency Prime Purchase. His advice? 'Choose a knowledgeable agent who is part of a big team – they can draw on their collective market expertise so that any property purchase is also an investment.' www.prime-purchase.com

What's it like to be...
ISLA, LORD EGREMONT'S FAWN



'Art is a lie that makes us realise the truth.' Picasso said that. Before my time, obviously – I'm only two weeks old, but I already want to be an artist. That's why Petworth is the perfect home. Constable called it 'the house of art'. How I adore his paintings. So bewitching, so sublime.

I myself had the typical start of a tortured artist. I was found fending for myself in the deer park, the gentle taupe of my fur contrasting against the rich green of the undergrowth – a metaphorical resonance of the figurative-narrative line-space matrix spatially undermining its essentially transitional quality. Conflict is part of the creative process – which is what I tell myself when I'm playing with the puppy who also lives with my patron, the head keeper, in this cottage. He can get a bit rambunctious, but performance art is his realm of self-expression and I respect that. This early on in my artistic career, I'm finding that being bottle-fed goat's milk every four to five hours, before having a contemplative sleep, helps me visually and conceptually activate ideas.

I like to study the human form – particularly when the human involved brings me food. The other members of my Pantisocracy are a raven, a jackdaw and a duck. Yes, the raven tries to peck me and the jackdaw and the duck have no interest in me at all, but one must try wherever possible to contextualise the substructure of critical thinking. ***Clare Bennett***

While Isla considered the reductive quality of the biomorphic form, Lord Egremont and his head keeper shut themselves away with the Turners.

Photographed by MARK COCKSEDGE

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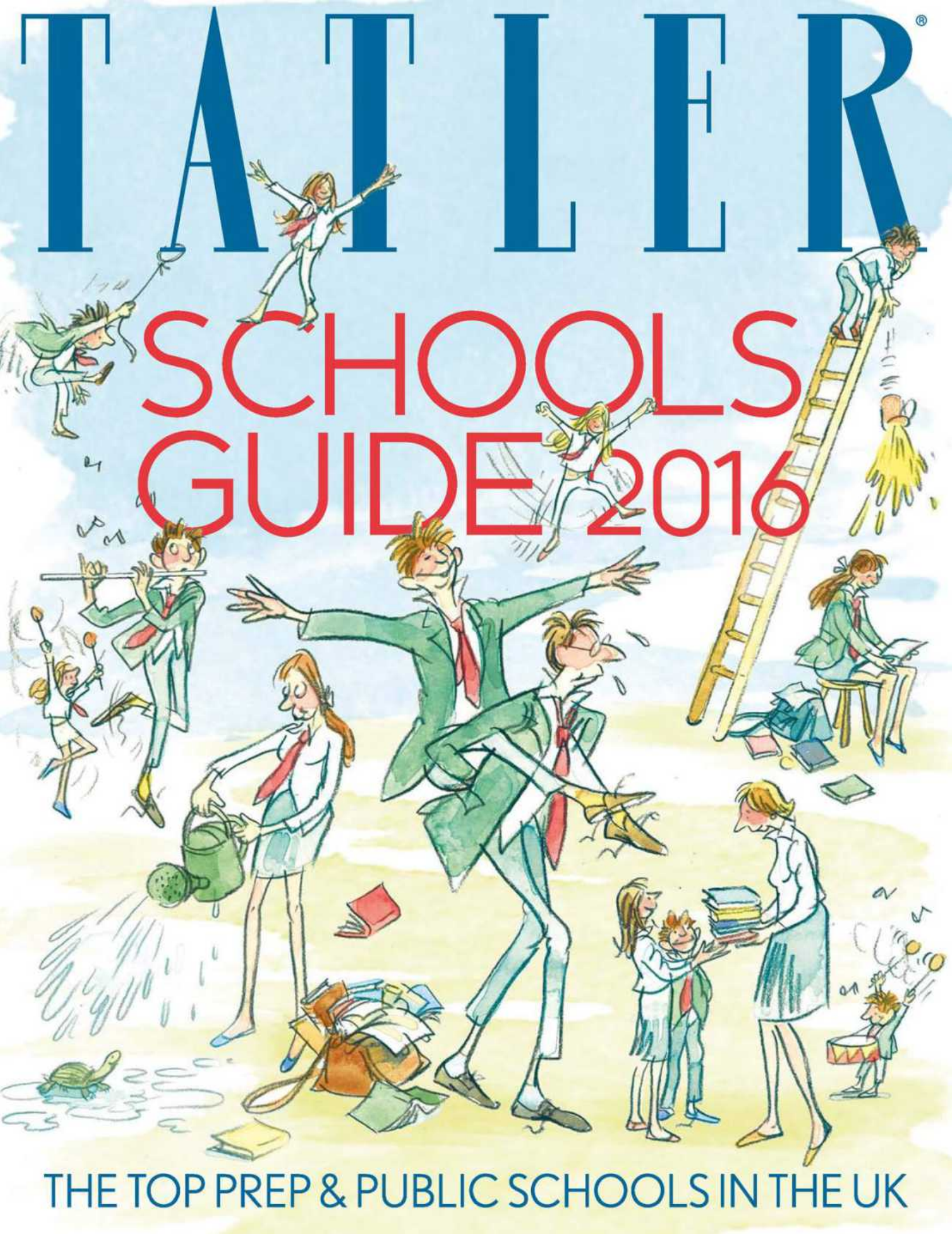


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SCHOOLS GUIDE 2016

Like finding a nanny or completing your tax returns, working out where to send your child to school can induce an almost paralysing state of anxiety. Sadly, we cannot help with the first two problems but, for the third, we bring you the 12th edition of the Tatler Schools Guide – the ultimate remedy to your educational woes. With us, there's no smoke and mirrors; we cut through the marketing jargon to tell you what's really what and who's really who in the world of independent schools. We rewrite the guide from scratch each year, and you cannot buy, bully or schmooze your way in – this is our judgement, pure and simple. The guide is meticulously researched and our crack team of spies travel countrywide, interviewing everyone from heads to mums and matrons. They've sized up sports halls and science centres, tasted the treacle sponge and even hung out behind the bike sheds. Trouble is, we've gathered so much knowledge over the years that we couldn't possibly put it all down here, so we are holding our first ever event – TATLER SCHOOLS LIVE! – a day of lectures and talks from Britain's leading educational stars.

We guarantee that you'll leave thoroughly clued-up. Because, above all, we love our schools and they shouldn't be something to stress over – they should be something to celebrate.

GEORGINA BLACKWELL
Schools Guide editor

VOCAB CHEATSHEET

CCF Combined Cadet Force
CE Common Entrance
CREST Award A project-based award for STEM subjects (see below)
D of E Duke of Edinburgh's Award
EPQ Extended Project Qualification
EPS Elite Player Squad
ESAA English Schools' Athletic Association
GDST Girls' Day School Trust
HMC The Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference
IAPS The Independent Association of Prep Schools
ICT Information and Communication Technology
IGCSE International GCSE
ISA International Schools Association
ISC Independent Schools Council
ISEB Independent Schools Examination Board
ISFA Independent Schools Football Association
ISI Independent Schools Inspectorate
NSEA National Schools' Equestrian Association
Pre-U A diploma-type qualification that's an alternative to A-levels
SATIPS Support and Training in Prep Schools
SEN Special educational needs
STEM Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
UCAS Universities and Colleges Admission Services
Value-Added The increase in a pupil's skills and knowledge over their time at the school, measured by independent assessment

Number of Oxbridge places quoted in public-school fact boxes refers to 2014



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LONDON

Alleyn's School

Townley Road, SE22 8SU ● ●
Website alleyns.org.uk
Head Dr Gary Savage, PhD, since 2010; previously under master at Westminster School Pupils 984 day: 459 boys, 525 girls Faith C of E Ages 11–18 Term fees £5,799 Oxbridge 18 places
Registration By November of year before entry; £75 fee Admission School's own exam, interview and previous school's report Alumni Jude Law, Sam West, Florence Welch
Prep: Head Simon Severino Pupils 239 day: 116 boys, 123 girls Ages 4–11 Term fees £5,175

One pupil at Alleyn's has been appointed to a national committee that advises the Government on mental-health issues and has also had a paper published on the subject by the Royal College of Psychiatrists. No, you are not reading a universities guide; this is an example of how Alleyn's is doing things. Head Dr Gary Savage – a thoroughly impressive man – runs the show at this all-singing, all-dancing co-ed in south London. A spy says it is 'near perfect', and a mother praises the 'superb, caring atmosphere'. Entry to the school is very competitive; they want academic ability and potential (A-level results soar at 94 per cent A*–B). A tip: pupils from the junior school continue through but must still sit the 11-plus exam. The juniors have a new head in Simon Severino, and soon there will be a new building for Years 7 and 8. Facilities across the board are top class; the pool has been revamped and there will be a new rooftop observatory on the extended science department. Drama and music have always been outstanding (look at those alum) – the student-run Bear Pit Theatre Company performs at the Edinburgh Fringe and pupils take part in national choirs, orchestras, conservatoires... you name it. There are 110 clubs a week at Alleyn's, not including sports extras. For the third year running, the boys' 1st XI football has won the ISFA Cup Fair Play award (and reached the quarter-finals), while the girls are national water polo champions. The Alleyn's way of life reaps some tremendous rewards.


City of London School



City of London School

Queen Victoria Street, EC4V 3AL ●
Website clsb.org.uk
Head Sarah Fletcher, MA, since 2014; previously head of Kingston Grammar School Pupils 920 day boys Faith Inter-denom Ages 10–18 Term fees £4,962 Oxbridge 24 places
Registration By November of year before entry; £125 fee Admission School's own exam and interview Alumni Julian Barnes, Daniel Radcliffe

CLS is a thoroughly modern, unpretentious place – the City location means that pupils are, in the school's words, 'urban, diverse and worldly-wise from a young age'. Teaching is superb and, without making a great song and dance about it, boys achieve excellent academic results – 92 per cent A*–B at A-level last year. The main intake is at 11+, when the school receives roughly 10 applications for every place, although they take some boys at 10+ and another cohort at 13+. 'Interviews are of paramount importance,' we are told. The catchment area is ginormous, and boys relish the independence of the commute – 'It's their downtime, away from parents and school,' says an insider. Over half of the boys learn an instrument, and last year pupils took part in productions with the ENO and at the Royal Opera House. The Winterflood Theatre is superb. Sport isn't a top

● BOYS ● GIRLS ● ● MIXED



ILLUSTRATIONS: BOB WILSON/PHOSPHOR ART. BACKGROUND: SHUTTERSTOCK



Francis Holland SW1

priority, but the football 1st XI were runners-up in the London Schools FA Cup, and boys won international honours in water polo, taekwondo and sailing. We know it's vulgar to talk about money, but could we just draw your attention to the fees? Compared with the other top London boys' schools, they're a drop in the ocean – lots of bursaries too.

City of London School for Girls

St Giles' Terrace, EC2Y 8BB ●

Website clsg.org.uk
Head Ena Harrop, MPhil, since 2014; previously director of studies Pupils 641 day girls Faith Non-denom Ages 11–18 Term fees £4,992 Oxbridge 18 places Registration By October of year before entry; £120 fee Admission School's own exam and interview
Alumnae Romola Garai, Dido
Prep: Head Jane Rogers Pupils 91 day girls Ages 7–11 Term fees £4,992

Deep in the concrete jungle of the Barbican there lives a magnificent, deeply intellectual species. 'They're in a different league,' says an observer. Welcome to City of London School for Girls, a one-of-kind, urban school offering a single-sex education of the highest level. Inspirational head Ena Harrop says, 'Learning spills out of the classrooms,' and when we visited we noticed that self-motivation and awareness shine through. Admission is highly selective: roughly 10 applicants per place sit the 11-plus exam, applying from all over London and beyond (that figure will only rise when Crossrail opens in Farringdon). The result is a diverse student body, and 20 per cent of pupils are on some kind of bursary. There are four classes of 24 girls in the junior school, whose transfer to the senior school is pretty much seamless. A quarter of leavers end up at Oxbridge; A-levels were a fabulous 79 per cent A*–A last year. Ms Harrop is keen to show girls there are many ways to be successful: the art on show is impressive; one girl was a winner in the *Guardian* Young Critics competition. This isn't really the place for the sportiest of souls but individual stars excel – one pupil is a Commonwealth Games silver medallist in table tennis. There's a feminist vibe and we love that the motto in the sixth-form common room is Eleanor Roosevelt's quip: 'A woman is like a tea bag – you never know how strong she is until she gets into hot water.'

Dulwich College

Dulwich Common, SE21 7LD ●

Website dulwich.org.uk
Head Dr Joseph Spence, PhD, since 2009; previously head of Oakham School Pupils 1,322 boys: 1,192 day, 130 boarding Faith C of E Ages 11–18 Term fees Day: £6,077; boarding: £12,684 Oxbridge 19 places Registration By November of year before entry; £100 fee Admission School's own exam and interview
Alumni Chiwetel Ejifor, Sir Ernest Shackleton, PG Wodehouse
Prep: Head Dr Toby Griffiths Pupils 444 day boys Ages 6 months–11 Term fees £6,077

Head Dr Joseph Spence is, says a mother, 'quite wonderful'. For him, terms such as extracurricular and co-curricular are misleading – everything comes under the heading 'adventures in education'. He has an obsession (his word) with what he calls free learning – 'all those truly educational and inspirational things that the boys do off-syllabus.' There's a new initiative called Dulwich Creative – a week of recitals, pop-up exhibitions, performances and flash mobs – and an annual Symposium, a day of debate and discussion (Dulwich boys won the World Schools Debating Championship). This is predominantly a day school with a boarding-school feel, so weekends are full-on (Saturday mornings are packed with music, art, drama), there's a strong house structure and a brilliant tutor system. Excellent academic results, too: 89.4 per cent A*–B last year. At 11+, the intake is 50-50 state and independent schools; a third of boys are on some kind of financial support, and the aim is to make this 50 per cent. There's no pre-test – they want to build a relationship with a boy and his family so that they 'buy into the philosophy of the school'. Sport is, and always has been, huge here: rugby gets top billing (they narrowly missed out on clinching a fourth successive NatWest Cup), but they're also good at swimming and water polo, and rowing is up-and-coming (gold and silver medals at the National Schools Regatta). Our spy was charmed by her sixth-form guides ('witty, candid and self-aware').



Emanuel School

Battersea Rise, SW11 1HS ● ●

Website emanuel.org.uk
Head Mark Hanley-Browne, MA, since 2004; previously deputy head of Highgate School Pupils 775 day: 435 boys, 340 girls Faith C of E Ages 10–18 Term fees £5,673 Oxbridge 4 places Registration At least a year before entry; £125 fee Admission School's own exam and interview
Alumni Michael Aspel, Peter Hain, Sir Tim Berners-Lee, Michel Roux

'It's really on the up,' says an insider of terrific Wandsworth all-rounder Emanuel. The proof? Seven applicants per place (FYI, they close the books when registrations hit 600), and families travel in from as far as Shepherd's Bush or north London thanks to handy Clapham Junction nearby. Psst! Entry in Year 6 is a popular way to bypass the horrors of 11+. Emanuel offers more art and sport scholarships than any other school in London, and the idea, says head Mark Hanley-Browne, is a 'balanced approach to education'. Hear, hear. And so ensuing achievements are excellent: one boy won a silver medal at the World Rowing Junior Championships; one girl performed in Tom Stoppard's *The Hard Problem* at the National Theatre this year. And all this is nicely finished off with 66 per cent A*–B at A-level. The facilities and green spaces are glorious for an almost-central London school, and work begins next summer on a new £9m arts and humanities centre, complete with film studio. Parents are as happy as the pupils – a recent satisfaction survey received very high scores. It's an active community – there's a choir for mums and dads, and we hear

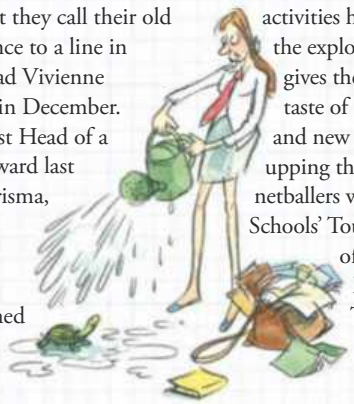
that when they go to watch their darlings row at the school's boathouse in Barnes, they tend to decamp to the Bull's Head on the opposite bank.

Francis Holland NW1

Clarence Gate, NW1 6XR

Website fhs-nw1.org.uk
Head Vivienne Durham, MA, until December. From January 2016, Charles Fillingham, MA, previously deputy head at City of London School for Boys Pupils 464 day girls Faith C of E Ages 11–18 Term fees £5,900 Oxbridge 3 places Registration By November of year before entry; £100 fee Admission London Girls' Schools' Consortium exam and interview Alumnae Dame Joan and Jackie Collins, Amanda Donohoe

The ISI inspectors pronounced FHS excellent in all areas – their parting comment was, 'We don't envy whoever has to improve upon this.' We couldn't agree more. This is a happy, supportive school, where girls achieve excellent results (89 per cent A*–B last year). It's less jet-set than its Sloane Square sister, and we weren't surprised to hear that it received record numbers of applications last year. 'FHS pupils are kind and clever,' the school tells us. 'Good manners are as important as academic achievement.' They nip across the road to Regent's Park for sport, or downstairs to the basement swimming pool, which is currently having a major facelift. Swimming is big here: Olympic gold medallist Rebecca Adlington pitched up to train the squad. And the sports tour of Malaysia sounds a blast: two hockey teams, three netball teams, 12 days. We like the sound of the Persona Grata cup, which is awarded to the girl who best embodies the qualities of a Polished Corner (it's what they call their old girls, in a reference to a line in Psalm 144). Head Vivienne Durham retires in December. She won our Best Head of a Public School award last year for her charisma, her superlative leadership and, frankly, because she's just so darned nice (niceness is a vastly underrated quality). And – drum roll, please – her successor is Charles Fillingham, deputy of City of London School, who will be Francis Holland's first male head. Needless to say, we are intrigued.



Francis Holland SW1

39 Graham Terrace, SW1W 8JF

Website fhs-sw1.org.uk
Head Lucy Elphinstone, MA, since 2012; previously senior leader and head of sixth form at Downe House Pupils 325 day girls Faith C of E Ages 11–18 Term fees £6,150 Oxbridge Occasional Registration By November of year before entry; £100 fee Admission London Girls' Schools' Consortium exam and interview Alumnae Jemima Khan, Vanessa Mae
Prep: Head Caroline Spencer-Kruger Pupils 165 day girls Ages 4–11 Term fees £6,150

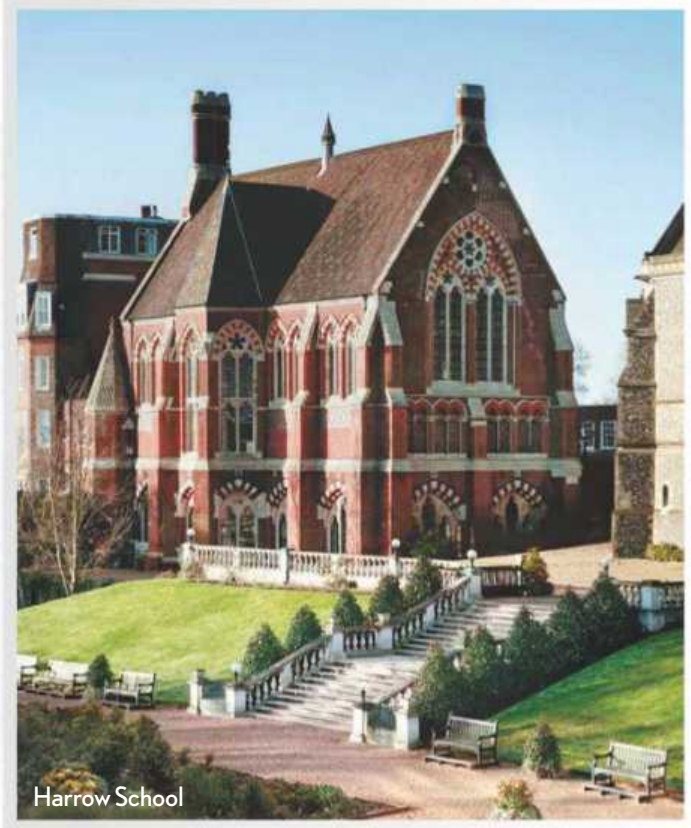
K&C mothers' nerves are pretty frayed: admission to Francis Holland Sloane Square used to be a dead cert, but times are changing. The academic bar has been raised, and whereas many in the junior school used to move at 11+, they're now staying put. (They still interview all candidates.) Of course, those who are already 'in' are very smug because they have über-head Lucy Elphinstone – 'she exudes warmth and energy,' says a mother – who has given the school a new lease of life. Ms Elphinstone is a great believer in 'multiple intelligences' and wants to build her girls' physical and emotional resilience so they are ready to embrace all the world will throw at them. Modernising the sixth form is a focus: the EPQ is new; business studies, music tech and photography are now available at A-level, and a snazzy new sixth-form centre is in the offing. Co-curricular activities have been boosted by the exploration society, which gives these London girls a taste of the great outdoors, and new sports staff are upping the ante: the U14 netballers won the London Schools' Tournament and many of the swimmers have had national success. Thankfully, some things haven't changed: ballet is superb here – and compulsory in the junior school – and the music and drama scene is thriving in the Carmel Hall performing arts centre. Aspirations are high, but there is no compromise on wellbeing – Ms Elphinstone says that Francis Holland is the 'happiest school she has ever worked in'.

The Godolphin & Latymer School

Iffley Road, W6 0PG

Website godolphinandlatymer.com
Head Ruth Mercer, BA, since 2009; previously head of Northwood College Pupils 784 day girls Faith Non-denom Ages 11–18 Term fees £6,060 Oxbridge 11 places Registration By October of year before entry; £100 fee Admission London Girls' Schools' Consortium exam and interview Alumnae Kate Beckinsale, Nigella Lawson

Godolphin is, says a parent, 'nicely rounded – not a posh school', although it has its fair share of Notting Hill glam parents. Head Ruth Mercer is a low-key, unshowy Lancastrian – for her, Godolphin is about the girls, and the opportunities available to them. At certain other schools, 'all they talk about is how hard the girls are going to have to work,' says a mother. 'It's not like that here.' There's no question that they do work hard, though: last year's IB results were the best ever, with an impressive average of 40.3 points; 77 per cent A*–A at A-level. Staff, says our mole, 'are ridiculously nice and incredibly kind'. It's increasingly competitive to get in, with more than seven applications for every place. And as for sport, it's 'netball, netball, netball'. says an excited pupil, with international-standard coaches; the cricket girls were regional borough winners; and cross-country runners celebrated their first-ever victory in the ESAA championship. They love their rowing too, and share a boathouse with the King's Wimbledon boys. And there's a whizzy new sport and fitness centre to boot. Drama is superb (the theatre is in a converted church) – and we hear great things about the recent production of *The Sound of Music*. There are trips galore too, among them 'skiing in the US and the Jordan desert', says the school – we know these girls are accomplished, but really!



Harrow School


Ibstock Place School

The Harrodian

Lonsdale Road, SW13 9QN ●●

Website harrodian.com
Head James Hooke, BSc, since 1999; previously a teacher at St John's School, Buenos Aires **Pupils** 440 day: 231 boys, 209 girls **Faith** Non-denom **Ages** 13–18
Term fees £6,766 **Oxbridge** 2 places
Registration By October of year before entry: £125 fee **Admission** CE or school's own exam **Alumni** Robert Pattinson, Jack Whitehall, Tom Sturridge
Prep: **Head** Jenny O'Neill **Pupils** 546 day: 272 boys, 274 girls **Ages** 4–13
Term fees £5,076

The Harrodian's highlights of last year all sound effortlessly starry and fabulous: a barnstorming battle of the bands in front of a celeb-laden panel; a jaw-dropping £250,000 raised for charity by a gala dinner; their production of the play *Let it Fall* sold out for its eight-day run at the Edinburgh Fringe; and at the inaugural Harrodian Film Festival, judged by industry professionals, eight-to-18-year-olds competed for the top prize of a day on set with Colin Firth, no less. We'd be lying if we didn't admit that this is a glitzy school, but what we like about it (and what matters) is that it's a unique animal on the London day-school scene: a little bit relaxed, with individuality wholeheartedly fostered. Not surprisingly, everyone wants to go here: the school starts at pre-prep and goes up to 18, with varying forms of assessment at each entry point (reception, 8+, 11+, 13+ and sixth form). At senior level, head James Hooke says they want strong contributors who are 'respectful, cheerful and community-focused'. Drama and art are of the highest standard, and A-level results keep rising – 77 per cent A*–B last year; one girl is off to read physics at Oxford, and there's a keen interest in US universities, particularly in California. A giant new sixth-form space is planned and, get this, the annual ski trip went to Japan last year, with three days spent in Tokyo enjoying the best sushi and temples – starry and fabulous all over again.

Harrow School

5 High Street, Harrow-on-the-Hill, Middlesex HA1 3HP ●

Website harrowschool.org.uk
Head Jim Hawkins, MA, since 2011; previously headmaster of Norwich School **Pupils** 825 boys, all boarding
Faith C of E **Ages** 13–18 **Term fees** £12,050 **Oxbridge** 22 places
Registration By December of Year 6; £225 fee **Admission** Pre-test, CE or school's own exam, previous school's report and interview **Alumni** Lord Byron, Sir Cecil Beaton, Sir Winston Churchill

Always dangerous to generalise, but in our experience Harrovians often share a refreshingly self-deprecating sense of humour and humility. They're ridiculously capable, self-confident and highly intelligent, of course, but there's no sense that the world owes them a living. Perhaps it's the school's London location, perhaps it's the all-boys, full-boarding thing (as you know, it's one of the last three in the country), perhaps it's the multinational mix... whatever. Head Jim Hawkins is well into his stride, starting his fourth year in charge, and the academics have never been better: 100 per cent A*–A grades at A-level in no fewer than six modern-language subjects last year, including French, and 85 per cent of all GCSE grades were A*–A. Victories and commendations galore in pretty much every national competition going: a record 19 Harrovians won Crest gold awards for their engineering projects. We like the sound of the new sixth-form electives, on everything from antiquity to 'super-physics' via architectural model-making and the history of string instruments. The top sports headline is the introduction of Olympic wrestling (bringing the total number of sports on offer to 35), swiftly followed by the fact that Harrow won its annual cricket match against Eton at Lord's. Victories for the skiers in the Canada Cup, and for the judo team in the British Schools Championships too. The 350 acres of playing fields are sensationally smart – hats off to the hard-working groundskeepers, who won the Institute of Groundsmanship's team of the year prize.

Highgate School

North Road, N6 4AY ●●

Website highgateschool.org.uk
Head Adam Pettitt, MA, since 2006; previously second master at Norwich School **Pupils** 1,044 day: 596 boys, 448 girls **Faith** C of E **Ages** 11–18
Term fees £6,235 **Oxbridge** 23 places
Registration By November of year before entry for 11+, two years before entry for 13+; £150 fee **Admission** School's own exam and interview **Alumni** Johnny Borrell, Charles Clarke
Prep: **Head** Mark James **Pupils** 486 day: 244 boys, 242 girls **Ages** 3–11
Term fees £5,720

Highgate has been busy celebrating its 450th anniversary, and the commemorative service at St Paul's Cathedral was a logistical triumph. Steering thousands of pupils


James Allen's Girls' School

and staff across London during rush hour is no mean feat, but it's really a trifle compared with what they achieve here. Head Adam Pettitt is passionate about his enthusiastic 'jump-out-of-bed' school, which is riding the crest of a very high wave: 650 applicants for 80 places at 11+ last year. The new-look junior school opens its doors in January with an intake at 7+ and four classes of 22, making Highgate quite the destination from seven to 18. The boys and girls are brimming with charm, confidence and brains, but, as Mr P says, 'in no way are they lacking proper, cosmopolitan north-London sass and edge'. Blimey! It may be a very city place but it's also very green, with acres of playing fields. Results are some of the best in the land at 93.1 per cent A*–B last year and 23 pupils won Oxbridge offers. A new high-performance programme mentors the tip-top sporty types, and has helped produce national-level fencers and water-polo players, county athletes and real tennis champions. Last year's conference promoting good mental health in teenagers, chaired by Emma Thompson, was hugely helpful for parents, and covered everything from self-esteem to wellbeing. We really couldn't approve more highly of what Highgate is doing.


King's College School

Ibstock Place School

Clarence Lane, Roehampton, SW15 5PY

Website ibstockplaceschool.co.uk **Head** Anna Sylvester-Johnson, BA, since 2000; previously head of ArtsEd Schools **Pupils** 634 day: 336 boys, 298 girls **Faith** C of E **Ages** 11–18 **Term fees** £6,130 **Oxbridge** 4 places **Registration** By November of year before entry; £125 fee **Admission** School's own exam and interview **Alumni** Emily Blunt, Suki Waterhouse

Prep: **Head** Diana Wynter **Pupils** 336 day: 168 boys, 168 girls **Ages** 4–11 **Term fees** £4,915

'A stunning building in beautiful grounds,' says our spy. 'Lots of decorative touches around the school – the head likes to go to auctions.' Mrs Sylvester-Johnson is smart in both senses of the word – she has transformed the school in her 15 years here, upped the emphasis on drama, music and art, and masterminded a vast building programme. Pupils come from a wide area (there's a bus service to Barnes train station), and 70 per cent transfer from the prep to the senior school. 'There's no "safe passage" through to the senior school,' advises the admissions tutor, but you're given plenty of warning if your child is unlikely to make the grade. Record-breaking GCSE results last year: 82 per cent of grades were A*–A, up from 77 per cent the previous year; 90 per cent A*–B at A-level. It's a sporty place, with eight acres of playing fields, floodlit courts and a sports hall. The U14 football boys won the ESFA Small Schools' Trophy, and a sixth-form girl captained the Welsh junior rowing team. Mrs S-J has a strict no-mobiles rule (sixth-formers are allowed them, as a privilege); no make-up either ('We love her,' says a mother). 'A country-school atmosphere with London polish,' says an insider. 'A general air of buzz and courtesy pervades.' Particular honours to the debating team, who faced the US national squad in the semi-finals of a three-day international competition in Slovenia – 'They lost!' says the school succinctly.



James Allen's Girls' School

East Dulwich Grove, SE22 8TE

Website jags.org.uk **Head** Sally-Anne Huang, MA, since September; previously head of Kent College Pembury **Pupils** 785 day girls **Faith** C of E **Ages** 11–18 **Term fees** £5,295 **Oxbridge** 6 places **Registration** By November of year before entry; £50 fee **Admission** School's own exams and interview **Alumnae** Anita Brookner, businesswoman Mary Francis

Prep: **Head** Finola Stack **Pupils** 300 day girls **Ages** 4–11 **Term fees** £4,795

After a glorious two decades as head of JAGS, Marion Gibbs has hung up her cap. She will be a tough act to follow, but Sally-Anne Huang, formerly of Kent College Pembury, is a popular choice for the hot seat. One of Mrs Gibbs's crowning achievements has been making the local community a part of JAGS – and vice versa. The long-planned music centre will open late next year; it will be shared by and run programmes with locals and fellow schools. 'Girls are prepared to give back and they are very imaginative in finding ways to do that,' says Mrs Gibbs. The school is a 'microcosm of 21st-century London': girls hail from a wide range of backgrounds and 50 languages are spoken. Last year A-levels were a highly impressive 93 per cent A*–B (they already do Pre-U English, and now history), and girls must be very comfortable academically to get in. The curriculum is rigorous but there is plenty of time for creativity: JAGS's

new play *#MyWay* showed at the Edinburgh Fringe. Gustav Holst was a master here, and there is a strong musical tradition – there was a particularly stunning concert at St John's Smith Square. JAGS has some admirable acreage for a London school; the athletics team are super (English Schools' finalists); girls enjoy sailing, riding and rowing; there's a horticultural club; and pond-dipping has a cult following.

King's College School

Southside, SW19 4TT ● ●
Website kcs.org.uk
Head Andrew Halls, MA, since 2008; previously head of Magdalen College School **Pupils** 850 day: 760 boys, 90 girls **Faith** C of E **Ages** 13–18 **Term fees** £6,610 **Oxbridge** 51 places **Registration** Three years before entry; £150 fee **Admission** CE or school's own exams **Alumni** Robert Graves, Marcus Mumford
Prep: **Head** Gerard Silverlock **Pupils** 450 day boys **Ages** 7–13 **Term fees** £5,950

Is King's Wimbledon the best school in the country? Yes, says *The Sunday Times*, which named it their Independent School of the Year for 2014-15. 'An example to the entire independent sector,' wrote the *Parent Power* editor. *The Week* crowned it Best for IB: over 52 per cent of last year's IB grades were the equivalent of an A*, with 10 pupils achieving the maximum possible 45 points; 51 of last year's leavers secured Oxbridge places. But what really sets KCS apart is head Andrew Halls's forward-thinking leadership. King's is opening a new lower school in September 2016, which means it will take up to 44 new boys straight into the senior school at 11+. (Its junior school, which shares the site, will carry on taking boys up to 13, as before). 'Our aim,' says Mr Halls, 'is to open the doors to children from primary schools.' Within two weeks of announcing the change, he had raised nearly £2m in bursaries for the new 11+ intake. This means that there will be fewer places up for grabs at 13+ (450 boys sat the pre-test for 60 places last year), but don't even think of tutoring – 'abhorrent,' says AH. Music, drama and sport are all stupendously strong (the 1st XV rugby boys beat Eton for the first time last season). Please note too the superb pastoral system, the lovely airy campus, the groundbreaking partnership programme with 27 local state schools and the kind, engaging, down-to-earth pupils. As a top prep head told us: 'King's is *the* hot school at the moment.'

The Lady Eleanor Holles School

Hanworth Road, Hampton, Middlesex TW12 3HF ●
Website lehs.org.uk
Head Heather Hanbury, MA, since 2014; previously head of Wimbledon High **Pupils** 690 day girls **Faith** C of E **Ages** 11–18 **Term fees** £6,078 **Oxbridge** 8 places **Registration** By December of year before entry; £100 fee **Admission** School's own exam, interview and previous school's report **Alumnae** Lynn Barber, playwright Caroline Bird
Prep: **Head** Ffion Robinson **Pupils** 190 day girls **Ages** 7–11 **Term fees** £5,035

During her first year at LEH, headmistress Heather Hanbury has been conducting a thorough review of the school. On her hit list are upping the integration of digital learning and improving specialist facilities in the junior school, but really, she inherited a place in peak condition. Results seem to know no bounds: three-quarters of A-levels were graded A*–A; eight girls left for Oxbridge, and three pupils won prestigious internships as part of the Deloitte Scholar Scheme. LEH preps girls well for university life: sixth-formers can dispense with uniform; enjoy breaks in the on-site Costa Coffee, or get immersed in the EPQ, or the newspaper. There is a junior school but entrance to the senior branch isn't guaranteed at 11+. Parents like that the school is single sex, but there's co-ed drama and CCF with the boys next door at Hampton. LEH has excellent sports facilities (swimming pool, boathouse, croquet lawn) and a sporting reputation and results to match: the 1st lacrosse team came second at the Nationals last year. Music is strong too: the Holles Singers made it to the finals of the BBC Choir of Year, and Friday Lunchtime Live gives anyone a chance to perform in front of an audience. These girls clearly love performing, but there's not a hint of showing off. No conceit here, but lots of accomplishment.

Latymer Upper School

King Street, W6 9LR ● ●
Website latymer-upper.org
Head David Goodhew, MA, since 2012; previously deputy head of Durham School **Pupils** 1,179 day: 601 boys, 578 girls **Faith** Non-denom **Ages** 11–18 **Term fees** £5,905 **Oxbridge** 26 places **Registration** By November of year before entry; £75 fee **Admission** School's own exam and interview **Alumni** Heston Blumenthal, Lily Cole, Hugh Grant
Prep: **Head** Stuart Dorrian **Pupils** 161 day: 91 boys, 70 girls **Ages** 7–11 **Term fees** £5,375

Competition for Latymer places is hotter than ever: 1,100 applicants sat the exam last spring; 400 were interviewed for 168 places. 'We are fishing in a brighter gene pool,' says registrar Catriona Sutherland-Hawes (when we visited, her phone was ringing off the hook with disappointed parents). 'Kids who would have gone elsewhere in the past are now choosing Latymer – here, you get the fun, you get the co-ed buzz.' And of course, you get the results: the school had its best ever A-level results last year (over 77 per cent A*–A grades; more than two-thirds of students achieved at least three A*–A grades), and please note four Oxbridge choral or organ scholarships. Pupils come from a broad range of backgrounds, thanks to the generous bursaries (they're aiming for half the intake to come from state schools, without engineering it; there are very few international students and, says an insider, 'no rich Russians'). The message on tutoring? Forget it. 'We don't like it, we don't want it, we will suss it out at interview,' says CS-H. The new sports centre will be the crowning glory of a 20-year development programme; there's a sensational science block – including the quietest library


Latymer Upper School


simonetta.it
simonetta


Putney High School

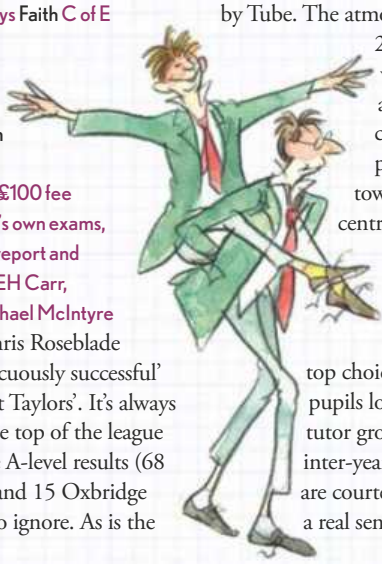
we've ever set foot in – and a fab music and arts centre. We like the fact that the student-run feminist society is packed with men, and were amused by the noisy crush in the corridors at breaktime – like being run over by a chatty steamroller.

Merchant Taylors' School

Sandy Lodge, Northwood, Middlesex HA6 2HT

Website mtsn.org.uk
Head Simon Everson, MA, since 2013; previously head of Skinner's School, Royal Tunbridge Wells
Pupils 890 day boys Faith C of E Ages 11–18 Term fees £6,256 Oxbridge 15 places Registration By November of year before entry; £100 fee Admission School's own exams, previous school's report and interview Alumni EH Carr, Clive of India, Michael McIntyre

Deputy head Chris Roseblade reports a 'conspicuously successful' year at Merchant Taylors'. It's always hovering near the top of the league tables, and those A-level results (68 per cent A*–A) and 15 Oxbridge places are hard to ignore. As is the pupil who was ranked in the top 25 UK chemists in the Cambridge Chemistry Challenge; or the fleet of Arkwright design scholars; or the musicians in the National Youth or Duet Philharmonic orchestras. Mr Roseblade says, 'We are interested in that distinctiveness that can lead to distinction in later life.' They have 350 applicants for the 60 spaces up for grabs at 11+, and about half of those applying are from state primaries. Central London parents have also been eyeing up this art-deco beauty: there are coaches from St John's Wood and Ealing and it's just 45 minutes from Bond Street by Tube. The atmosphere on the 250-acre campus, with its own lake and test-class cricket pitch, is less pressured than in town. A new design centre is ready and the sports facilities are being developed (cricket and hockey are the top choices). Parents and pupils love the vertical tutor groups that promote inter-year mingling. Boys are courteous but have a real sense of fun – they're punctual too. There is no school bell, just 'simple promptitude', jokes head Simon Everson.



DID YOU KNOW?

Four modern stone gargoyles created for Highgate School's new Charter building were modelled on pupils

More House School

22–24 Pont Street, SW1X 0AA

Website morehouse.org.uk
Head Amanda Leach, BSc, since 2014; previously deputy head Pupils 190 day girls Faith RC Ages 11–18 Term fees £5,720 Oxbridge Occasional Registration By October of year before entry; £100 fee Admission London Girls' Schools' Consortium exam and interview Alumni Classicist Dr Naoíse Mac Sweeney

London's day schools can be ruthless and competitive, so it's good to hear of a Knightsbridge gem that bucks the trend. A new addition to the guide this year, More House describes itself as a 'small school with a big personality'. A mother adds, 'It definitely punches above its weight.' It's all-girls and pocket-sized, so it feels very much like one big family, and it has a genuinely nurturing, caring environment. It's Catholic too; the choir sang for the Pope – and 75,000 people – at the Vatican last year. The intake is broad and creative types will thrive: the art and design is superlative and overseen by three specialist teachers; there are weekly life-drawing classes for the sixth form in the evenings. Head Amanda Leach has spent the past year giving More House a rebranding. So there's a new PE kit, new sports clubs such as boot camp and swimming, and they've redecorated the communal areas. Home is the grandeur of Pont Street, so there's no outside space, but the school uses the parks and Imperial College for sports. We know some savvy Chelsea mothers who are booking in for visits.

North London Collegiate

Canons Drive, Edgware, Middlesex HA8 7RJ

Website nlcs.org.uk
Head Bernice McCabe, MBA, since 1997; previously head of Chelmsford County High Pupils 770 day girls Faith C of E Ages 11–18 Term fees £6,169 Oxbridge 30 places Registration By November of year before entry; £100 fee Admission School's own exam and interview Alumnae Rachel Weisz, Anna Wintour
Prep: Head Jo Newman Pupils 309 day girls Ages 4–11 Term fees £5,214

Head Bernice McCabe says NLC gives girls 'floors, not ceilings'. Academically, they're bursting through the roof on skyhooks, like Roald Dahl's great glass elevator. This is the top school in the country for IB, with an average score of 42 points; four girls achieved the maximum score of 45 points (only 150 students in the world achieve this, out of the 60,000 who take IB). Add to that a cool 98 per cent A*–B at A-level. NLC is also the top school in the country for GCSE – over half of last year's students received straight A*s. But there is so much more to the school than mere brains: we're incredibly impressed by the way North Londoners make things happen. For the Senior Societies lecture slot on a Thursday, girls take responsibility for booking speakers and lined up such eminent names as Lord Winston and US Ambassador Matthew Barzun (John Bercow, too – hey, variety is the spice...). We like the range and scope of the 20-plus student-run publications. Girls excel at sports like badminton and table tennis; riding and scuba diving are also on offer. Music and drama are top-notch, with more than 40 concerts and productions annually. A staging of *Earthquakes in London* last year sounds particularly dramatic: '"Real" earthquakes and rain,' they tell us. See – not just raising the roof, but shaking the foundations too.

Putney High School

35 Putney Hill, SW15 6BH

Website putneyhigh.gdst.net
Head Dr Denise Lodge, PhD, since 2002; previously head of Sydenham High School Pupils 630 day girls Faith Non-denom Ages 11–18 Term fees £5,580 Oxbridge 2 places Registration By November of year before entry;


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St Paul's School

£100 fee Admission School's own exam, interview Alumnae Journalists Camilla Cavendish and Sophie Raworth
Prep: Head Jo Wallace Pupils 320 day girls Ages 4–11 Term fees £4,595

It's girl power a-go-go at Putney High – the school held its first WiLpower (Women into Leadership) symposium last year, with the aim of getting its young charges to reach for the stars. Head Dr Denise Lodge, a rather good role model herself, is keen on nurturing independent, ambitious young women and believes it's never too soon to think about career prospects. Strong connections with alumnae ensure work-experience placements are plentiful, and budding doctors attend talks by former students at the medical society. We also like the sound of the travel scholarships on offer: one girl went to Hawaii to study volcanoes, another to research childcare and autism in Shanghai. Putney High girls are also excellent on home turf: 87 per cent A*–B at A-level. The school has acquired a new boathouse on the Thames to support the increasingly successful rowing club. Clare Balding launched the elite-sportswoman programme this year too. We heartily approve of mental-fitness week, with activities such as social-media 'fasts' and yoga sessions. The junior school has fantastic news to report: they are national chess champions and the choir sang with Michael Ball and Emeli Sandé – and reached the finals of the Barnardo's Choir of the Year competition. Next up: a new performing-arts centre with West End-style facilities opens this term.

Queen's College

43–49 Harley Street, W1G 8BT ●
Website qcl.org.uk
Head Dr Frances Ramsey, DPhil, since 2009; previously director of studies at Westminster School Pupils 370 day girls Faith C of E Ages 11–18 Term fees £5,620 Oxbridge Occasional Registration By November of year before entry; £100 fee Admission London Girls' Schools Consortium exam and interview Alumnae Emma Freud, Lady Soames, explorer Gertrude Bell
Prep: Head Annie Dempsey Pupils 217 day girls Ages 4–11 Term fees £4,985

Dr Frances Ramsey's headship 'has come of age' says our mole. Since our last visit, Queen's College has received a record number of applications at 11+; pastoral care has been restructured (issues identified and tackled by year group) and parents are raving about the place. We are always so impressed by how creative Queen's College girls are. Last year they put on a gritty homage to World War One, *Belles of the Ball*, about factory girls turned footballers. The cast received professional voice coaching by a mother for their Lancashire accents. The new director of music, poached from South Hampstead High, is transforming the department: masterclasses with professionals and tons of trips to concert halls (but fingers crossed the music rooms stay put in the former wine cellars). The art, as always, is outstanding and many girls win places on foundation courses. Sixth-formers are very much leaders of the college, and enjoy 'boutique' class sizes and privileges – own clothes and trips to Oxford Street inside school hours. Last year, A-levels took a spectacular leap up to 80.7 per cent A*–B – the product of Dr Ramsey's first admission intake, so expect more of the same. She adds: 'Queen's College is now properly selective and enjoying it!' Girls can start at four at the prep around the corner and take an exam to continue on through to the senior branch. One parent noted: 'Girls have a quiet self-assurance, without the need to thrust themselves forward to prove their worth.'

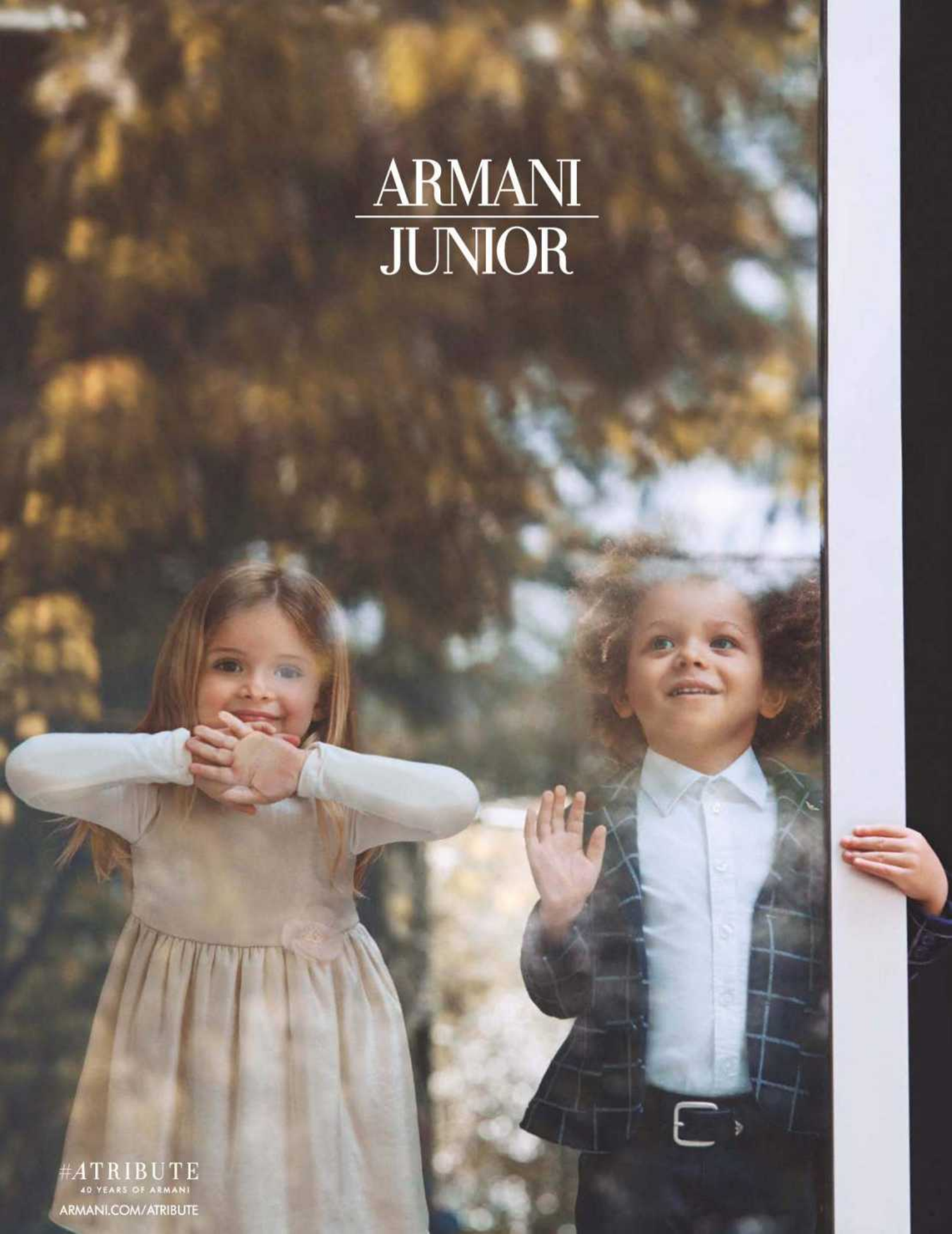
Queen's Gate

133 Queen's Gate, SW7 5LE ●
Website queensgate.org.uk
Head Rosalynd Kamaryc, MSc, since 2006; previously headmistress of Wykeham House School, Hampshire
Pupils 360 day girls Faith Non-denom Ages 11–18 Term fees £6,100 Oxbridge Occasional Registration By November of year before entry; £100 fee Admission London Girls' Schools' Consortium exam and interview Alumnae The Duchess of Cornwall, Jennifer Saunders
Prep: Head Rosalynd Kamaryc Pupils 160 day girls Ages 4–11 Term fees £5,250

'No one chose to go to Oxbridge in 2014,' says Queen's Gate. These girls are bright – they scored 86 per cent A*–B at A-level last year – but they're heading across the pond to university; 20 per cent of leavers went on to places like George Washington University and NYU. Art and drama have always been a big deal here. Last year, the senior school put on *Pygmalion*, while the juniors dazzled in *Alice in Wonderland*. The brilliant Sasha Mataya oversees a buzzing art department, and there's even a 3D printer in design and technology. Queen's Gate may be in Kensington and have a multinational, multilingual student body, but the vibe is relatively understated (the dress code is very relaxed). Under the supervision of calm, collected head Rosalynd Kamaryc, the school has been doing great things. Science has had a boost thanks to refurbished labs and an action-packed science week. Sport has really taken off too. Girls won fencing titles in the British Youth Championships last year, and GCSE PE has been added to the curriculum. Facilities aren't a problem: the school has a deal with Imperial College, so pupils can use its gym and boathouse. It's as tough as ever to win a place here and, sadly, the lovely junior school isn't a sneaky way in, as girls are on the same footing as external candidates.

St Paul's Girls' School

Brook Green, W6 7BS ●
Website spgs.org
Head Clarissa Farr, MA, since 2006; previously head of Queenswood School
Pupils 740 day girls Faith Non-denom
Ages 11–18 Term fees £7,306 Oxbridge


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48 places Registration By November of year before entry; £125 fee Admission School's own exams, previous school's report and interview Alumnae Alexandra Shulman, Harriet Harman

SPGS is elegant to the nth degree (white hydrangeas, marble floors and wood panelling), as is its high mistress, Clarissa Farr. 'She is very impressive,' says a mother. 'Not afraid to shout her school's success from the rooftops.' It's unashamedly elitist, with good reason – thoroughly intimidating for some (parents as well as daughters), educational Elysium for others. They scored 91.5 per cent A*–A at A-level last year; academic prizes are too numerous to list; 48 girls to Oxbridge, with another 14 to US universities ('the American system suits the Paulina mentality,' said our Harvard-bound guide). They're looking for 'outstanding intellectual potential' – if you've used a tutor, they want to know about it, and the firm message is: please don't. 'We want girls to be happy and to thrive once they arrive here,' they say. If your daughter isn't a natural fit for the St Paul's mould, there's no point trying to force her into it. Self-motivation is key – when we asked about the pressure, the girls talked of 'a sense of all doing it together'. One pupil confided that the morning buzz is all about last night's maths homework, rather than more normal teenage topics. The school is run with a light touch and few rules: 'You can have as many piercings as you like,' one girl assures us. Sports facilities are astounding, art and design incredible, music off-the-scale extraordinary. 'A phenomenal school for the right girl,' says our spy.

St Paul's School

Lonsdale Road, SW13 9JT

Website stpaulsschool.org.uk
Head Professor Mark Bailey, PhD, since 2011; previously head of the Grammar School at Leeds Pupils 940 boys: 910 day, 30 boarding Faith C of E Ages 13–18 Term fees Day: £7,548; boarding: £11,305 Oxbridge 56 places Registration Four years before entry; £175 fee Admission Pre-test, CE and interview Alumni John Milton, Samuel Pepys, George Osborne

Best get the stats out of the way first as it's the same, absolutely tremendous story: 86.4 per cent A*–A at A-level; 56 Oxbridge offers. This famed Barnes institution offers 45 acres of opportunity for the boy who is intelligent enough, organised enough and motivated enough to grab it with both hands. And they really must be – those who fall short during admission at 11+ are weeded out thus: 580 sit the ISEB pre-test; 360 are interviewed; 90 offers are made. The big story in recent years has been the £77m redevelopment of the sports, science, drama and teaching facilities: if St Paul's achievements were jaw-dropping before all this building work, we can't imagine what they'll be like after the transformation is completed in 2019. The new Samuel Pepys Theatre (he was an Old Pauline, obviously) opened last year. Sport is a key part of life here, and they excel at a broad range, including rowing (own boathouse, indoor tank, the most medals at the National Schools' Regatta this year) and fives (biggest facility in the country; national champions). There's also karate and water polo, and the cycling team won the Inter-Schools Track & Field Championship last year. In the music department, pupils reached the finals of the BBC Young Jazz Musician of the Year; one organist was awarded his professional diploma. As our insider noted: 'This is the sort of platform from which boys can fly.'

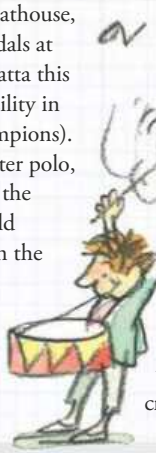
DID YOU KNOW?

The boat in which Dulwich College alum Sir Ernest Shackleton made his 800-mile voyage after the sinking of the *Endurance* now sits in the school's science block

South Hampstead High School

3 Maresfield Gardens, NW3 5SS

Website shhs.gdst.net
Head Helen Pike, MA, since 2013; previously director of studies at Royal Grammar School Pupils 640 day girls Faith Non-denom Ages 11–18 Term fees £5,373 Oxbridge 11 places Registration By November of year before entry; £100 fee Admission School's own exam and interview Alumnae: Helena Bonham-Carter, Dame Angela Lansbury, Daisy Lowe
Prep: Head Gabrielle Soiti Pupils 260 day girls Ages 4–11 Term fees £4,324



South Hampstead High moved into its stunning new building last November and it was well worth the wait. It is sleek, modern and totally fitting for a cosmopolitan school that, one mole says, has 'real edge and spark'. Girls are known for being clever and funny, and head Helen Pike says the school is 'as academic as it is creative, as liberal as it is rigorous'. Last year, leavers scored a super 89.2 per cent A*–B at A-level, and the fabulous music and art departments collaborated on a sell-out production of *Les Miserables*. South Hampstead has national and county-level sports stars – supported by the school's Going for Gold programme – in everything from football and dressage to gymnastics and tennis. FemSoc organised a public event with Juliet Stephenson and novelist Naomi Alderman as speakers. Ms Pike has been tinkering with the curriculum: the EPQ is new, as is a Great Ideas course; science and maths are getting more airtime at GCSE, while the Mehr Licht ('more light' – the school's motto) programme focuses on enrichment. The junior school is excellent and, importantly, a way into the senior school. There are up to 10 applicants per place at all entry points (4+, 7+, 11+, 16+). The good news is you're allowed to keep trying!

University College School

Frognal, Hampstead, NW3 6XH

Website ucs.org.uk
Head Mark Beard, MA, since 2013; previously deputy head of Brighton College Pupils 867 day: 797 boys,




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Westminster School

70 girls Faith Non-denom Ages 11–18 Term fees £6,141 Oxbridge 21 places Registration Two years before entry; £100 fee Admission CE or school's own exam and interview Alumni Paul Dacre, Tristram Hunt, Will Self

Prep: Head Lewis Hayward Pupils 250 day boys Ages 7–11 Term fees £5,676

UCS is laidback and pupils are renowned for their high spirits and high jinks, but, boy, they know how to knuckle down. Last year, GCSE records were smashed with a terrific 88 per cent A*–A; they shot the lights out at A-level too (93 per cent A*–B), and 21 pupils walked off with Oxbridge places. This is a grounded, caring place that does lots for charity; there are strong links with schools in India and Uganda, and, closer to home, sixth-formers teach Spanish to primary students in Whitechapel, and another group holds a weekly IT clinic for the elderly. Drama flourishes: there is a creative stage crew, several LAMDA groups and the sixth form took a gender-bending adaptation of *Hamlet* (written, directed and acted by pupils) to Edinburgh. UCS is a striking collection of historic buildings, and landscaping is planned to return the campus to its full Edwardian glory; a new sports pavilion at the pitches in West Hampstead is on the cards too. Football is flying and the 1st XI are smug at having beaten Westminster in the final of the London Independent Schools Cup. Pupils also play England Schools football, rugby for Middlesex, and don't forget those boys with international chess rankings. It's eternally popular: 350 applicants at 11+, 300 at 13+ for 30 places at each level. But if you're in the junior school, you get a free pass through – for now, at least.

Westminster School

17 Dean's Yard, SW1P 3PB

Website westminster.org.uk

Head Patrick Derham, MA, since 2014; previously head of Rugby School Pupils 741. Day: 469 boys, 86 girls; boarding: 144 boys, 42 girls Faith C of E Ages 13–18 Term fees Day: £8,092; boarding: £11,686 boarding Oxbridge 97 places Registration Three years before entry; £140 fee Admission CE or school's own exam and interview Alumni Christopher Wren, AA Milne

Our spy summed up Westminster as 'an intellectually inspiring establishment' of the highest order. You can add to that historic, pre-eminent, exemplary – and eccentric. Last year's stats were typically outstanding: 81 per cent A*–A at A-level; 66 per cent D1/D2 (A* equivalent) in the Pre-U; 97 Oxbridge places, plus 24 to US universities. These pupils don't win debating championships just in English, they do so in French too. Although not all are that athletically inclined, the 1st quad won the Schools Head of the River and broke the course record last year. Entrance is notoriously tough (though one observer says you can spot a potential Westminster boy a mile off), and the school is vehemently anti-tutoring. Applicants take the ISEB pre-test in Year 6, which helps to filter out the pretenders. Head Patrick Derham is a year into his posting; he is very hot on broadening access, and charitable endeavour and volunteering have become greater parts of the school's DNA. (Harris Westminster Sixth Form College, a free school backed by Westminster's educational élan, is also getting into its stride.) Westminster's sixth form is co-ed; about a quarter of pupils board throughout the school, and there is a strong house system. Sitting in the shadow of Parliament and the Abbey, tradition weighs heavily: the list of slang is endless and customs range from the cerebral (weekly assemblies held in 'Westminster Latin') to the bizarre: the Greaze, held each Shrove Tuesday, is when a horsehair-reinforced pancake is tossed over a 15ft bar and fought over by pupils.



Wimbledon High School

Mansel Road, SW19 4AB

Website wimbledonhigh.gdst.net

Head Jane Lunnon, BA, since 2014; previously deputy head of Wellington Pupils 580 day girls Faith Non-denom Ages 11–18 Term fees £5,507 Oxbridge 8 places Registration By November of year before entry; £100 fee Admission School's own exam and interview Alumnae Biochemist Professor Dame Louise Johnson, Dame Margaret Rutherford

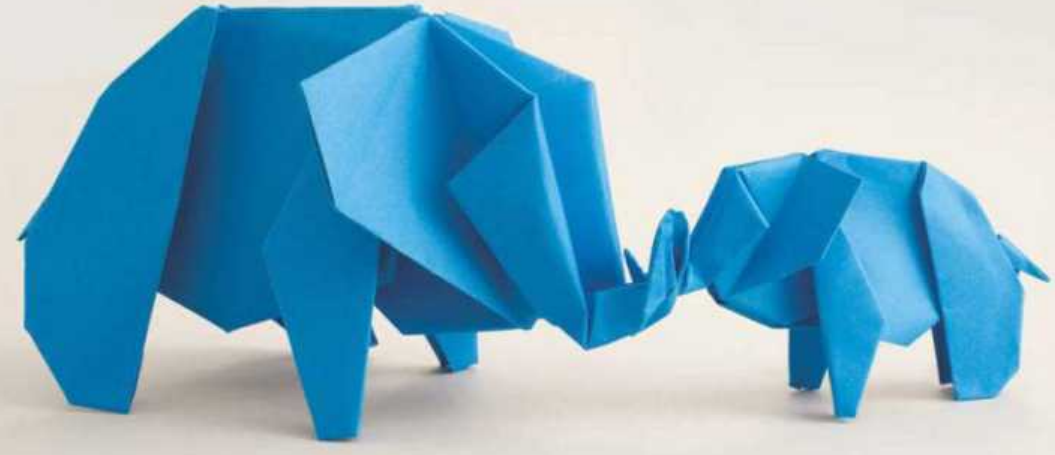
Prep: Head Kate Mitchell Pupils 320 day girls Ages 4–11 Term fees £4,281

WHS girls are articulate and self-assured, but nicely natural with it. 'We want to combat the feminine inclination to perfection by relishing the messiness of the journey to understanding,' says head Jane Lunnon (she was deputy head of Wellington, and it shows). Rather than coasting to a host of A*s (although most of them do – 87 per cent A*–B at A-level last year), girls are encouraged to take risks, embrace failure and enjoy the process of learning, not just the end results. Maths is the top A-level choice, and 40 per cent of leavers opt for STEM subjects at uni. Drama and music are very strong: the production of *Macbeth* sounds nothing short of blood-curdling, set in a 'post-apocalyptic, dystopian Scotland'. The senior chamber choir toured New York, performed in a freezing Times Square and enjoyed workshops with musicians from the Juilliard, who assumed they were at a performing-arts school. There's a new director of sport, a new rowing club and girls' football run by Fulham FC. We like the sound of WimTalks (like TED Talks), and the Friday jamming sessions ('eat cake, drink tea, listen to the girls performing Vivaldi or Katy Perry'). And, hey, they've even introduced coding classes for parents (how do we join?). In Mrs Lunnon's words: 'It's a have-my-cake-and-eat-it school.'

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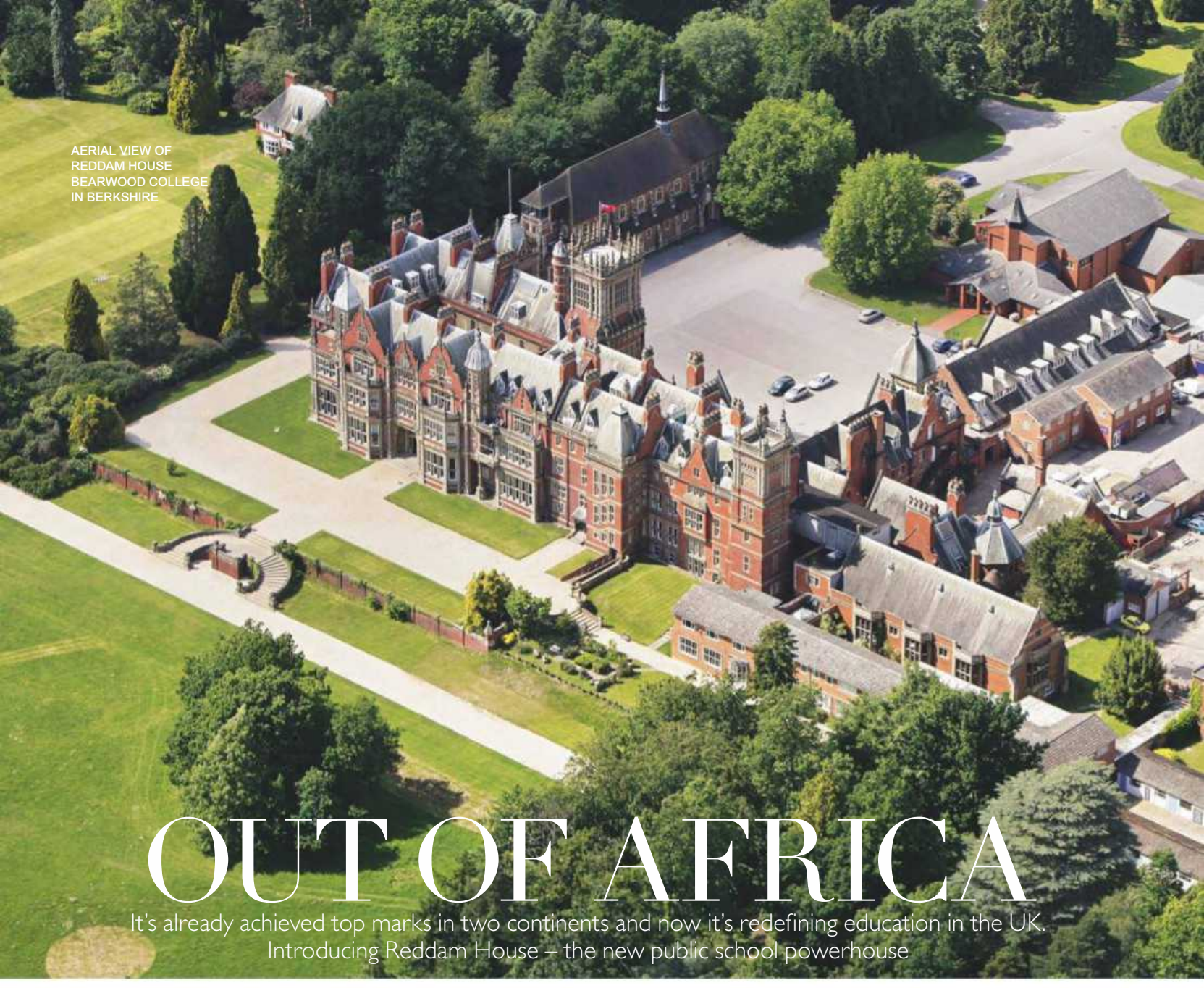
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AERIAL VIEW OF REDDAM HOUSE BEARWOOD COLLEGE IN BERKSHIRE

OUT OF AFRICA

It's already achieved top marks in two continents and now it's redefining education in the UK. Introducing Reddam House – the new public school powerhouse

A warm wind is blowing through British education and it comes from South Africa. Reddam House, whose pace of development on two Continents (Africa and Australia) has been as impressive as its academic results, opens what will be its flagship school in the UK this September at the magnificent Bearwood College, Wokingham. Founded by Graeme Crawford, Reddam House has as its managing director Stephen Spurr, the headmaster who turned Westminster into the highest-performing school in the country. 'This is a thrilling project that enables us to bring a fresh, dynamic option to this country,' declares Crawford, 'and deliver our absolute commitment to the happiness and individuality of each child, while pursuing excellence in every sphere.'

The unique Reddam House philosophy has emerged from a passion for education. It's a family thing. Crawford's father was a headmaster-turned-school inspector, four of whose five children, including Graeme, became teachers – and the fifth, a designer, helps give the schools their contemporary look. It was during 10 years in the classroom that Graeme Crawford discovered how to inspire children to achieve their personal best. 'My lessons were challenging but fun; so my kids got the best results.' In 1993, he opened his first school, Crawford College, in Johannesburg. By 1999, there were six highly successful schools across the country. The first Reddam House was founded at Constantia, a mountain-backed suburb of Cape Town, in 2000. It's success has inspired Reddam House schools in Cape Town, Pretoria, Johannesburg and Sydney – a collection, now including the UK, of 10.

This astonishing rate of expansion has only been possible because of the strength and consistency of Crawford's educational principles. While public schools are rightly proud of their tradition, do they always equip pupils for the modern world? Crawford has deconstructed the system, examined the fitness of every part, and reassembled it as a new, super-performing machine. 'Academically, our approach is to hand-pick the top teacher for every subject – the right teacher to inspire and motivate children, whether in the classroom, on the sports field or on stage.' 'Excellence' is a word that Crawford and Spurr use unashamedly. But top results – let alone rounded personalities – aren't achieved by doggedly flogging a rigid curriculum. 'If you're teaching the children to think, understand and apply, you can test them in any way and they'll perform well.' This has been proved in Australia with its almost obsessive State testing; although not selective, Reddam House Sydney is one of the topmost performing schools in the country. Reddam House regards the life skills of self-confidence, leadership and



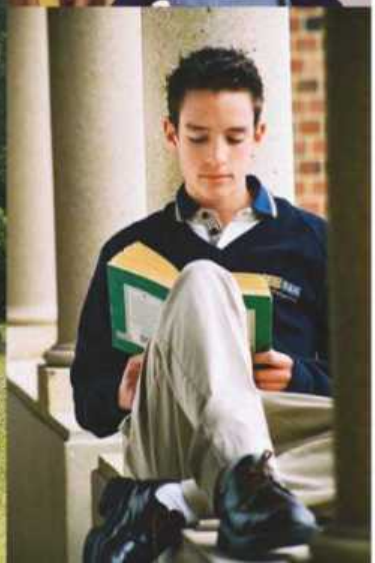


FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, DR STEPHEN SPURR, MANAGING DIRECTOR, GRAEME CRAWFORD, FOUNDER, TOBY MULLINS, HEADMASTER AND TAMMY HOWARD, HEADMISTRESS









public speaking as paramount. So drama is an integral part of the curriculum – for everybody; this helps the shyest children to grow in confidence, rather than simply boosting the confidence of those who are already natural performers.

Every Reddam House pupil learns an instrument and performs in an ensemble. An emphasis on dance has led to some monumental ballet productions. And, needless to say, any institution with a South African and Australian pedigree can be expected to take sport seriously. Crawford believes that school shouldn't be weirdly different from the world outside. So all the Reddam House schools are naturally co-educational, with a flexible uniform and a vibrant campus life.

Reddam House Bearwood is a splendid Victorian mansion now handsomely restored. Built for a Victorian proprietor of *The Times* newspaper, John Walter, it is set in a glorious 120 acre estate with woods, a lake and an exceptional number of sports pitches. The school is described as a 'through-school', taking children aged 1 to 18 in three divisions – Early Learning, Junior and Senior

'Academically, our approach is to hand-pick the top teacher for every subject – the right teacher to inspire and motivate children, whether in the classroom, on the sports field or on stage'

Graeme Crawford, Founder of Reddam House

Schools. These are housed in different parts of the estate, giving children a feeling of separation from each other and allowing a sense of progression as they move up, within an environment they already love.

With Reading station only 24 minutes from Paddington, and soon to be accessible by Crossrail from Canary Wharf, Reddam House Bearwood is superbly placed for London families. Weekly boarding is available to 25% of the senior school and that number will grow when a new boarding house opens. Ultimately, the pupil roll across the three divisions will be 1,000 children – big enough to support a rich offering of subjects and activities, but sufficiently intimate for pupils to be known by their teachers and head.

Reddam House's UK and European expansion, backed by the investment group Educas, founded by Nadim M Nsouli, now includes Fulham Prep, the preparatory and pre-prep school in London. It is a move that is set to elevate this popular and successful school into the capital's premier rank. Other premium sites in Italy, France and Switzerland are being considered for future openings. And the best part? Mobile parents will be able to move around the world without disrupting their offspring's education, and the youngsters themselves will have an enviable chance to transfer between different schools. Says Spurr: 'What an exciting way this is to prepare children to be the global citizens of tomorrow.' We couldn't agree more.

Tammy Howard, Early Learning and Junior Schools Headmistress;
email: thoward@reddamhouse.org.uk
Toby Mullins, Senior School Headmaster;
email: tjmullins@reddamhouse.org.uk

For information, visit reddamschools.com or call 0118 974 8300

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SOUTH-EAST

Abingdon School

Park Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 1DE

Website abingdon.org.uk
Head Felicity Lusk, BMus, since 2010; previously head of Oxford High School
Pupils 961 boys: 827 day, 134 boarding
Faith C of E Ages 11–18 Term fees Day: £5,925; boarding: £12,320 Oxbridge 23 places Registration By the end of November of year before entry; £100 fee Admission Pre-test and CE or school's own exam and interview
Alumni Tom Hollander, Toby Jones
Prep: Head Crispin Hyde-Dunn Pupils 257 day boys Ages 4–13 Term fees £4,935

We've always said that Abingdon boys are delightfully modest despite their high-flying achievements. The same cannot be said of the school office, who, when asked about the highlights of the year, replied: 'Highlights are difficult to pick out when the bar is set at Abingdon height.' So what is Abingdon height? It's achieving their largest ever haul of A*s at A-level last year (32.8 per cent) and 23 Oxbridge offers. It's performing in the Sagrada Família in Barcelona or winning the Young Enterprise Bin Business Challenge. These lads have always been sporty (particularly victorious in rugby and rowing), but the film unit and drama department are knockout too. Oxfordshire is packed with excellent schools, but Abingdon, with its fine grounds and handsome, red-brick buildings, is most parents' top choice. It's mostly day, with a small boarding community, and combines the best of both worlds: the 'other half' is the name for all the extracurricular stuff going on outside the classroom. We love that on a trip to Italy the classicists so impressed fellow tourists with their knowledge that some boys became impromptu tour guides for the day. The school has been soaring under head Felicity Lusk but, sadly, she is retiring next July. Michael Windsor, from Reading Blue Coat School, takes the reins. Abingdon Prep, known locally as Josca's, has its own campus separate from the senior school, 10 minutes out of town.

Ardingly College

Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH17 6SQ

Website ardingly.com
Head Ben Figgis, MEd, since 2014; previously deputy head of Oakham School Pupils 558. Day: 179 boys, 118 girls; boarding: 157 boys, 104 girls Faith C of E Ages 13–18 Term fees Day: £7,720; boarding: £10,475 Oxbridge 4 places Registration No deadline; £100 fee Admission CE or school's own exam
Alumni F1 driver Max Chilton, Ian Hislop
Prep: Head Chris Calvey Pupils 384 day and boarding: 200 boys, 184 girls Ages 2 ½–13 Term fees Day £4,880; boarding: £6,020

Peter Green has moved on to Rugby, leaving Ardingly in the very capable hands of Ben Figgis (formerly deputy head of Oakham) and his wife, Joanna. School numbers are up – and results too: 74 per cent A*–B at A-level; IB scores are regularly in the top 10 nationally. The school beat 600 others to win the Royal Society of Chemistry's Top of the Bench competition, so – says Mr Figgis – 'officially has the best chemistry students in the UK'. The Ardingly version of PSHE is Eudaimonia ('flourishing' in Greek) – they devote whole days to the subject to make sure pupils are clued up on wellbeing. 'We also reach the parts the exam system does not reach,' says Mr Figgis. There's the solar car, for example, built with the support of McLaren, Jaguar Land Rover and Cambridge University, which will be racing in the World Solar Challenge from Darwin to Adelaide – Ardingly is the only school outside Australia ever to enter the event. Dame Judi Dench is patron of the school's Artsfest, a festival attended by students from state and independent schools. The U18 football team won the ISFA cup for the first time in 17 years; they're strong on hockey and netball too, with lots of former England players on the coaching staff. Oh, and the cricket 1st XI beat the MCC. Our spy's verdict: 'A safe choice for parents.'

Bancroft's School

Woodford Green, Essex IG8 0RF

Website bancrofts.org
Head Mary Ireland, BSc, since 2008; previously deputy head of Christ's Hospital Pupils 872 day: 466 boys, 406 girls Faith C of E Ages 11–18 Term fees £5,192 Oxbridge 12 places Registration By December of year before entry; £60 fee Admission School's own exam and interview
Alumni Alan Davies, author Hari Kunzru
Prep: Head Joe Layburn Pupils 260 day: 118 boys, 142 girls Ages 7–11 Term fees £4,228

The postcode may be Essex but Bancroft's is just at the end of the Central line and an intelligent alternative to the usual London suspects. It's a big, multicultural co-ed, with superb results (91 per cent A*–B at A-level). The architecture is heavy Victorian grandeur, but the vibe is bang up-to-date and buzzing. 'Think Brownian-motion particles,' says an observer. 'I've never seen so much being achieved in one space.' Head Mary Ireland strongly believes that pupils should be encouraged


Abingdon School

BOYS GIRLS MIXED



ILLUSTRATIONS: BOB WILSON/PHOSPHOR ART. BACKGROUND: SHUTTERSTOCK

to take sensible risks and aim high, so applying to Oxbridge is very much encouraged. Mrs Ireland has cut back on homework to give pupils more time for drama, music and sport. 'Every child only goes to school once,' she says. 'We want that experience to be the best it can.' Bancroft's teams are regional champions at badminton and cricket, county champs in netball and hockey, and they're hot on CCF and D of E. Pupils attribute their success to the strong house system, the inclusive nature of the school and the extracurriculars. There are five applicants for every place at 11+. It's an aspirational school (lots of City parents) with – says our spy – 'real get-up-and-go'. Mrs Ireland retires in 2016; no word yet on her successor, but the management team is 'hugely competent', so we look forward to more of the splendid same.

Bedales School

Church Road, Steep, Petersfield, Hampshire GU32 2DG ●●

Website bedales.org.uk
Head Keith Budge, MA, since 2001; previously head of Loretto **Pupils** 454. Day: 67 boys, 73 girls; boarding: 132 boys, 182 girls **Faith** Non-denom **Ages** 13–18 **Term fees** Day: £8,825; boarding: £11,230 **Oxbridge** 6 places **Registration** By April of year before entry; £100 fee **Admission** Assessment and interview **Alumni** Lily Allen, Viscount Linley
Prep: **Head** Jane Grubb **Pupils** 295 day and boarding: 151 boys, 144 girls **Ages** 3–13 **Term fees** Day: £6,115; boarding: £7,715

This is a school where teachers are known by their first name (even the head); where there's no uniform; where they've been making hay for over 100 years (400 bales in 2015); and where a pupil might be transforming a horse-drawn cart into a wedding carriage, or trying out a new drone. It wouldn't happen anywhere else. Bedales has always dared to be different and its reputation precedes it, as does its list of rather starry alumni and parents. However, head Keith Budge wants the school to be known for the 'enduring experience' rather than the 'glamorous few'. The experience is a liberal, relaxed one, where true individuality is celebrated and pupils have the freedom to choose. For example, Bedalians opt for core subjects in IGCSEs or the school's unique Bedales Assessed Courses – simply put, 'really interesting courses not replicated elsewhere', says Keith. Pupils scored a record 61 per cent A*–A at GCSE last year; and one pupil received the highest mark for Pre-U music in the country. The new Kadian Observatory opened for stargazing and a new art-and-design building will open next year. They're also starting a sixth-form enrichment programme, based on a series of one-term courses – we'd sign up for oak-frame building. The majority of pupils board in mixed-age houses, but being so close to London most vacate at weekends. Dunannie and Dunhurst are the school's junior branches, and they all march to that same – but different – beat.


Bede's

Bede's

Upper Dicker, East Sussex BN27 3QH ●●

Website bedes.org
Head Dr Richard Maloney, PhD, since 2009; previously deputy head at Sutton Valence School **Pupils** 750. Day: 290 boys, 162 girls; boarding: 173 boys, 125 girls **Faith** Non-denom **Ages** 13–18 **Term fees** Day: £6,805; boarding: £10,300 **Oxbridge** Occasional **Registration** Early registration advised; £85 fee **Admission** CE or school's own exam, interview and previous school's report **Alumni** Cricketers Luke Wells and Shai Hope
Prep: **Head** Giles Entwisle **Pupils** 299 day and boarding: 197 boys, 102 girls **Ages** 4–13 **Term fees** Day: £5,350; boarding: £7,835

Bede's, a new addition to the Guide, has been quietly upping the ante under the watchful eye of head Dr Richard Maloney. It's one of the best schools in the country for value-added at A-level, which means they're jolly good at coaxing the inner superstar out of their wards (73 per cent A*–B last year). We've heard of unhappy pupils moving to Bede's and finding joy in its Sussex fields, and the SEN department is terrific. Individual achievements this year include one pupil exhibiting at the National Portrait Gallery Next Generation award; another was selected for the British Youth Opera. The U13 1st XI cricket team were crowned county champions, and students represent England in football, rugby, hockey and netball. About 40 per cent of pupils board, roughly half of them weekly. The houses are as swanky as anything, facilities in general are phenomenal (award-winning art school, residential ballet school) and they've recently launched a new campus-wide biomass heating system. But get this, the school zoo breeds endangered species such as polecats and hazel dormice. Dr Maloney has made some exciting new staff appointments and is injecting life skills into the curriculum. Bede's is definitely one to keep an eye on.



Bedford School

De Parys Avenue, Bedford MK40 2TU ●

Website bedfordschool.org.uk
Head James Hodgson, MA, since 2014; previously usher at Magdalen College School **Pupils** 688 boys: 456 day, 232 boarding **Faith** C of E **Ages** 13–18 **Term fees** Day: £5,862; boarding: £9,915 **Oxbridge** 4 places **Registration** By December of year before entry; £100 fee **Admission** School's own exam and interview **Alumni** Lord Ashdown, Alastair Cook, Al Murray
Prep: **Head** Ian Silk **Pupils** 389 boys, day and boarding **Ages** 7–13 **Term fees** Day: £4,978; boarding: £8,029

Head James Hodgson is a sure-fire hit; the boys are big fans of his open-door policy and, of course,

his cricket skills (he is a Cambridge Blue, no less). Sport looms large at Bedford: the school has graced national schools' finals in the past year in cricket, rowing, rugby and rugby sevens. Old boy Alastair Cook often drops by and recently played for the Bedfordshire farmers against the staff team. D of E and CCF are tremendously popular too (nothing to do with the fact that Bedford Girls are involved, obviously). The school offers calm and greenery in the middle of busy (but not beautiful) Bedford town. Boys can start off at the prep on the edge of campus and move up to the senior school. It is largely day (about 35 per cent board), but has an all-go, boarding-school ethos. Mr Hodgson emphasises it's a grounded place, where 'boys shake you by the hand and look you in the eye'. The opening of the 280-seat Quarry Theatre was marked by a performance of *Henry V*, and drama scholarships are now up for grabs to complement this high-class new venue. School rock band Basilisk already have their name in lights since releasing an EP on iTunes earlier this year and performing a 'live lounge' set on the school radio. Academically, Bedford is very solid: 79.4 per cent A*–B at A-level; a small group do IB, and averaged 36 points last year. With Mr Hodgson in charge, there will be more where that came from.

Benenden

Cranbrook, Kent TN17 4AA

Website benenden.kent.sch.uk
Head Samantha Price, BA, since 2014; previously head of Godolphin Pupils 544 girls, all boarding Faith C of E Ages 11–18 Term fees £11,485 Oxbridge 6 places Registration Four years in advance recommended; £100 fee Admission CE or school's own exam, interview and previous school's report Alumnae The Princess Royal, Baroness Shackleton, Sue Ryder

Busy, busy, busy is the message we're receiving – and what would you expect from the only all-girls, all-boarding outfit in the land? We like head Samantha Price very much and she's been subtly revising the school's aims: 'Benenden: a complete education' is the school's new strapline. So girls might meet a Paralympian, nip to Paris for a Model United Nations debate, listen to a forensic-science lecture, perform in *The School for Scandal* or go on an exchange to Beijing – all while bossing a terrific 90.5 per cent A*–B at A-level. The list of sporting achievements is too long to list here, but the lacrosse, tennis and netball are brilliant. New initiatives include the Extend, Excel and Explore period on a Friday, when pupils try Arabic for beginners or 'presenting and pitching'. The school wants the facilities to inspire as much as the teaching, and a 10-year 'centenary vision' is in place for a new all-weather pitch, school hall and a staff 'village'. The weekend activities programme is immense – sailing, windsurfing, T-shirt painting or even a chocolate-fountain party – and you don't pay extra on the school bill. There are six boarding houses, plus four for sixth-formers, and they are paired with houses at Tonbridge School. Benenden is more popular than ever: register at least four years in advance.

Bradfield College

Bradfield, Reading, Berkshire RG7 6AU

Website bradfieldcollege.org.uk
Head Dr Chris Stevens, DPhil, since September; previously deputy head at Marlborough Pupils 754. Day: 55 boys, 29 girls; boarding: 416 boys, 254 girls Faith C of E Ages 13–18 Term fees Day: £9,140; boarding: £11,425 Oxbridge 2 places Registration Two to three years before entry advised; £125 fee Admission CE or school's own exam, interview and previous school's report Alumni Tony Hancock, astronomer Sir Martin Ryle

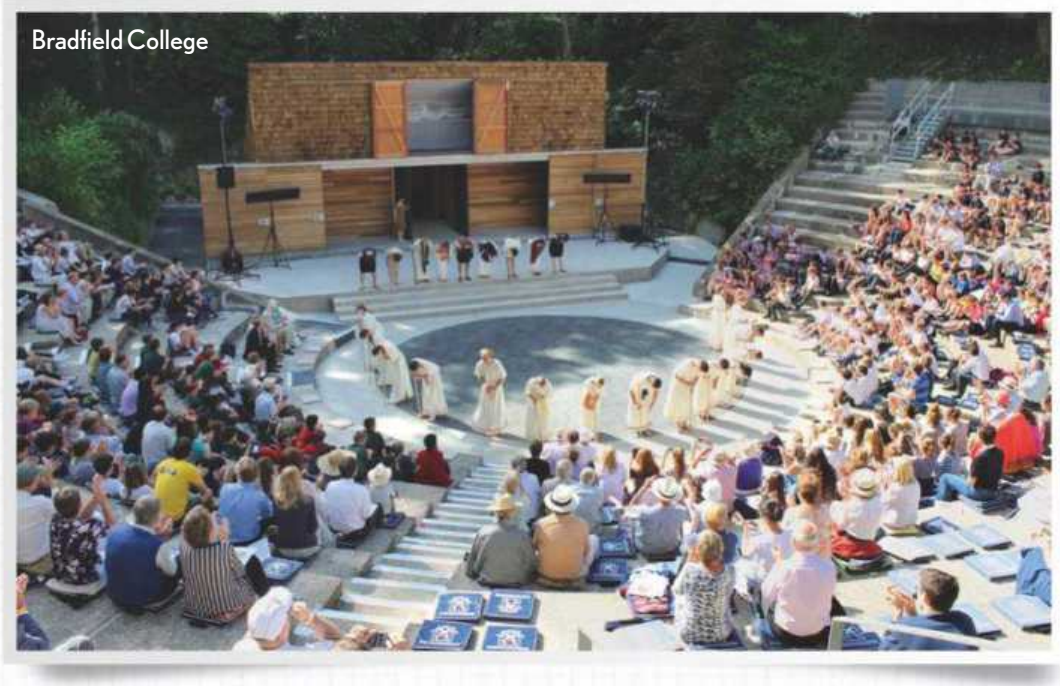
Let's not mourn ex-head Simon Henderson's departure to Eton too much, because Bradfield has nabbed Marlborough's deputy, Dr Chris Stevens, to take over. He knows his onions when it comes to co-ed, all-rounder boarding schools. What makes Bradfield unique is the villagey feel to its stunning campus and that first-year boys and girls board together in one house, Faulkner's. Not only does it have its own dining room (better food than the main school canteen, we're told) but first years form a real bond from the get-go. A spy tells us: 'Bradfield has a more nurturing approach than other co-ed schools.' Parents are local and unsnobby; the girls appear more polished than the boys – to be expected, perhaps. The real strong point academically is the IB: leavers scored an average of 36 points last year; A-levels were 77 per cent A*–B; the careers' department is one of the best we've seen. Few can fell Bradfield on the football field and the 1st XI reached the finals of the Boodles ISFA cup last year. Another unique Bradfield offering is the glorious open-air amphitheatre, where they perform an annual Greek play; last year's *Antigone* was seen by 3,000 people. The facilities are marvellous and very comfortable too: ensuite bathrooms in many houses; the new Stunt Pavilion has deep sofas and snooker tables; and oh, the reception area – if there was a *Tatler* award for the best meet-and-greet, Bradfield would win hands down.

Brighton College

Eastern Road, Brighton BN2 0AL

Website brightoncollege.org.uk
Head Richard Cairns, MA, since 2006; previously usher of Magdalen College School Pupils 985. Day: 406 boys, 239 girls; boarding: 186 boys, 154 girls Faith C of E Ages 11–18 Term fees Day: £7,370; boarding: £11,780 Oxbridge 27 places Registration Up to three years before entry; £120 fee Admission CE or school's own exam, previous school's report and interview Alumni Sir Michael Horden, architect Sir Thomas Jackson
Prep: Head Harry Hastings Pupils 528 day: 280 boys, 248 girls Ages 3–11 Term fees £5,390

One word: exceptional. You want more? Cosmopolitan and urban but with the sea on one side and the South Downs on the other, and London a short train-ride away. Brighton College is the highest-achieving co-ed school in the UK for the third year running (94 per cent A*–B at A-level; an average GCSE score of 10 A*s; 27 Oxbridge offers) and is, in the words of one


Bradfield College

publication, the 'most forward-thinking school in Britain'. Alongside the substance, there's a whole lot of style: pupils learn presentation skills, and there are 'how to' clubs, where they learn to lay a table, iron a shirt and read a map. The rugby 1st XV is unbeaten in Sussex and Hampshire for the past eight seasons; the girls' U15 cricket team are national T20 champions; runners won gold medals for England at the ISF athletics championships... 'We know – we don't know how they do it either,' says the school. Music, drama and dance – you've guessed it: exceptional. When we asked, 'What's new?', they said, 'It's more a question of what's not new': one major building project per year under Richard Cairns's headship. The elegant new girls' boarding house has won a RIBA award, and all the others have had sleek makeovers by international interior designers – even the table football is chic grey and white. Mr Cairns told us he feels 'incredibly lucky to be headmaster of this amazing school'. Yup, he's exceptional too.


Brighton College

Caterham School

Caterham, Surrey CR3 6YA ● ●
Website caterhamschool.co.uk
Head Ceri Jones, MA, since September; previously second master at Tonbridge School Pupils 900. Day: 378 boys, 362 girls; boarding: 100 boys, 60 girls Faith Inter-denom Ages 11–18 Term fees Day: £5,352; boarding: £9,915 Oxbridge 17 places Registration By November of year before entry; £100 fee Admission School's own exam; interview and previous school's report Alumni Angus Deayton, conductor Geraint Jones
Prep: Head Howard Tuckett Pupils 300 day: 156 boys, 144 girls Ages 3–11 Term fees £4,499

Julian Thomas has left Caterham for the very hot seat at Wellington College but, no matter, Ceri Jones, formerly second master at Tonbridge School, has arrived. Mr Jones inherits a school setting a brilliant pace: an excellent 90 per cent A*–B at A-level last year; 17 Oxbridge offers. The specialist programme for top athletes is reaping rewards too; pupils take part in England lacrosse and fencing and Surrey netball, and win national athletics medals. One girl won gold for Great Britain in the 1500m race at the Paralimpíadas Escolares, the premier para-sports event for schools in the world. It's all down to the Learning and Teaching programme, which aims to get pupils through life as much as exams. A big selling point for Caterham is the 200-acre campus in a wooded valley (ignore the utilitarian school buildings), close to the M25, Gatwick Airport and London. It's very popular with Surrey mummies – one says, 'It's good value for day pupils – you get a lot more for your money because there are boarders to cater for.' (The boarding cohort is small and very international.) iPads are being rolled out for all and there are plans to refurbish the performing-arts area. We're looking forward to seeing what Mr Jones can bring to Caterham.

Charterhouse

Godalming, Surrey GU7 2DX ● ●
Website charterhouse.org.uk
Head Richard Pleming, MA, since 2014; previously head of Wrekin College Pupils 788. Day: 25 boys, 6 girls; boarding: 628 boys, 129 girls Faith C of E Ages 13–18 Term fees Day: £9,787; boarding: £11,843 Oxbridge 15 places Registration Three years before entry; £250 fee Admission CE or school's own exam and previous school's report Alumni David Dimbleby, Jeremy Hunt



Our notoriously picky researcher was bowled over by Charterhouse. It could have been the architecture: those glorious cloisters, that stunning library (we draw a veil over the less-lovely Seventies boarding houses). It could have been the 250 acres of playing fields, pitches, courts, tracks and golf course, or the Charterhouse Club – 'the most impressive school sports centre I've visited,' says an insider, used by locals as well as pupils, and with a café bustling with glamorous mums. It could have been the boys, smart in their brown tweed jackets (which isn't something you can always say about teenage boys). Or the art block – 'a hive of industry and organised chaos,' says our mole (the top three works of art at the Royal Academy A-level Summer Exhibition were all by Charterhouse pupils) – or the theatre, where four tons of gravel had been dropped in to form the set for *A Comedy of Errors*. Head Richard Pleming is 'utterly charming and kind, full of energy and enthusiasm'. Sixth-formers choose between the breadth of the IB and what Mr Pleming calls the 'stretch and challenge' of Pre-U (93 per cent of last year's Pre-U results were awarded distinctions or merits – the equivalent of A*–B at A-level). In Mr Pleming's words, this is 'a happy school, with a serenity and purpose'. Yes, we're bowled over.

Christ's Hospital

Horsham, West Sussex RH13 0YP ● ●
Website christs-hospital.org.uk
Head John Franklin, BA, since 2007; previously head of Ardingly College Pupils 870. Day: 28 boys, 22 girls; boarding: 407 boys, 413 girls Faith C of E Ages 11–18 Term fees Day: £6,600; boarding: £10,150 Oxbridge 6 places Registration By September of year before entry; £50 fee Admission Assessment and interview Alumni Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Jeremy King, Charles Lamb

Christ's Hospital really does fall into the school-like-no-other category – check out the uniform, for starters. Yellow stockings and flapping Tudor coats aside, CH provides more bursaries and scholarships than any other school in the country. Parents' income is means-tested; about 15 per cent of families pay full fees – 'they have made a conscious decision to come to Christ's Hospital because of the school's egalitarian ethos,' says head John Franklin. (NB The

school is academically selective too, and 500 apply for 85 places.) It is co-ed and full-boarding so weekends are busy; most of the 40 or so day pupils in Year 7 soon ask to board. The mentoring system in houses means students develop a 'family tree' throughout the school. The 1,200-acre site, 40 miles from London, is striking – there are some more functional buildings in the background, but the new language and resource centre is all gleaming glass. Mr Franklin says the school is 'improving its academic focus' and four very focused pupils scored an excellent 40 or more points in last year's IB. A-levels were a tip-top 82 per cent A*–B; they do Pre-U art, and three pupils achieved a level-one distinction. We're always impressed by the daily parade into lunch – led by the school band – and amused that pupils sport Doc Martens with that historic uniform.

Downe House

Cold Ash, Thatcham, Berkshire RG18 9JJ

Website downehouse.net
Head Emma McKendrick, BA, since 1997; previously head of the Royal High School, Bath **Pupils** 574 girls: 550 boarding, 24 day **Faith** C of E **Ages** 11–18 **Term fees** Day: £8,190; boarding: £11,320 **Oxbridge** 9 places **Registration** By June of year before entry; £100 fee **Admission** CE or school's own exam and assessment day **Alumnae** Clare Balding, Miranda Hart

A savvy insider says: 'Downe House is still highly sought after and riding a massive wave that shows no sign of breaking.' Emma McKendrick, aka Kenny, stands firm at the helm and her '10-year vision' is continuing apace: the new £6m lower school, modelled on the cosy school house in the village that was recently sold (cue tears from old girls), is finished. Next on the list is a 'centre for learning' with teaching pods and a café, which wouldn't look out of place on a university campus. A mother describes girls as diligent and conscientious – with some *Malory Towers* mischievousness thrown in. They're entrepreneurial too: a Young Enterprise beanie project won David Beckham as a fan, and an old girl recently rebuffed two dragons in the den for investment in her marshmallow business. They do a Pre-U/A-level mix: the Pre-U has proved a bit 'Marmite', but a terrific 70 per cent of grades were A*–A equivalent last year (nine Oxbridge offers too) and a wider choice of A-levels is being brought back to give girls a more bespoke curriculum. Boarding is full-time and full-on, and there are plenty of opportunities for girls to dominate on the sports pitches or dazzle on stage, which they do. We were tough on the food last year but our comments have been taken on board and lots of bars have popped up: a noodle bar, a deli bar, a burger bar (but no, not *that* kind).


Eastbourne College

DID YOU KNOW?

We hear that Lancing College is having its socks pulled up by new head Dominic Oliver (who arrived from Bedales) – it's certainly a place to keep an eye on

Eastbourne College

Old Wish Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN21 4JX

Website eastbourne-college.co.uk
Head Simon Davies, MA, since 2005; previously vice master of Bedford School **Pupils** 631. Day: 180 boys, 158 girls; boarding: 177 boys, 116 girls **Faith** C of E **Ages** 13–18 **Term fees** Day: £7,100; boarding: £10,775 **Oxbridge** 4 places **Registration** No deadline; £75 fee **Admission** CE or school's own exam **Alumni** Michael Fish, Eddie Izzard

You only need to score 50 per cent at CE to get into Eastbourne but the pupils that leave here are 100 per cent the finished article. This coastal co-ed is a well-balanced place all round: an even split of boys to girls and day to boarding, and everyone is brilliant friends. This is a school that takes the long view, and pupils are given freedom to find their niche. Head Simon Davies is mindful that by the time his alumni are 25, past exam results will not be so meaningful (leavers still notched up 78 per cent A*–B at A-level). 'Mr Davies's values are spot on,' says a spy. Former pupils play for national rugby and cricket squads but equally might excel at rifle shooting or freestyle scootering. The arts are super: last year, young architects won the Bloor Homes housing-design competition; the school had the highest A2 DT mark in the country for a second year running; pupils perform Cole Porter or Sophocles with equal aplomb; and the Gold Arts Award has been introduced to stretch creative types further. We are excited to see the results of Project 150, the huge redevelopment of the school's heart, which will include a new sports hall, pool, dining room and reception. This place is also a big community player: two pupils won East Sussex Youth Awards; there is partnership with Glyndebourne; and the new Eastbourne Schools Partnership promises community collaboration inside and outside the classroom.

Eton College

Windsor, Berkshire SL4 6DW

Website etoncollege.com
Head Simon Henderson, BA, since September; previously head of Bradfield College **Pupils** 1,319 boys, all boarding **Faith** C of E **Ages** 13–18 **Term fees** £11,907 **Oxbridge** 81 places **Registration** By the age of 10 ½; £300 fee **Admission** School's own exam, interview and previous school's report at 11, CE at 13 **Alumni** The Archbishop of Canterbury, David Cameron, Bear Grylls

Eton's former head, Tony Little, is a legend in the educational firmament, possessor of the neatest moustache in education, and – in the words of one of his former colleagues – an all-round good chap. We could say the same of his successor, Simon Henderson, who has zipped up the career ladder – head of history at Eton, deputy head of Sherborne, head of Bradfield – and takes on the headship of the world's most prestigious school at the tender age of 39. Mr Henderson tells us he's looking forward to getting to know his new charges (no mean feat, with year groups of 260), and is planning to introduce small weekly supper parties at his house. At Bradfield, he banned the word 'unique' because it's become such a cliché – but if there's one word that sums Eton up, it's that. It's terrifically hard to get in, of course – 1,100 boys apply for around 250 places each year. But wow, what opportunities once they're in. One father reports: 'Mr Little said to us words to the effect: "The one thing I guarantee is to hand boys back to their parents very tired at the end of term."' The facilities are outstanding, and continue to get better. The new Jafar debating hall has to be seen to be believed – built in the style of an ancient Greek theatre for £18m, it's designed to encourage oral advocacy skills. So, no microphones or Powerpoint. Eton is, says a parent, 'a forward-looking and international centre of excellence: the social and ethnic mix is much more diverse than many people realise.' When the choir toured India last year, they went as guests of the Maharaja of Jodhpur. The tour blog is an entertaining read – high praise for 'the sensational and inspirational naan bread'.

Haberdashers' Aske's Boys' School

Butterfly Lane, Elstree, Hertfordshire WD6 3AF

Website habsboys.org.uk

Head Peter Hamilton, MA, since 2002; previously head of King Edward VI School, Southampton Pupils 1,160 day boys Faith Inter-denom Ages 11–18 Term fees £5,887 Oxbridge 37 places Registration By November of year before entry; £100 fee Admission School's own exam and interview Alumni Sacha Baron Cohen, Sir Nicholas Serota, Simon Schama

Prep: Head Yvonne Mercer Pupils 287 day boys Ages 5–11 Term fees £5,887

We're angling for an invitation to join Habs Boys' Latin Scrabble society – *qui audet adipiscitur*. These chaps are a multicultural, multi-faith, multitalented lot – you'll find them playing the bassoon in the National Youth Orchestra, winning gold medals at the UK ju-jitsu championships, bagging national athletics titles and being crowned National Schools' Chess champions (for the fifth time). It's highly competitive to get in, with five applicants for each place. Get your boy into the pre-prep at 5+ and he'll move straight through to the prep at 7+; transfer to the main school from the prep 'is expected but not guaranteed'. With such selective entry, it's no surprise that the results are eye-watering. The prep has been the top-performing boys' school in league tables for the past seven years, and the senior school scored an impressive 91.5 per cent A*–A grades at A-level last year (a new school record) and won 37 Oxbridge places. Two-thirds learn an instrument, and one of last year's highlights was the gala concert at the Barbican, in which over 400 Habs' pupils (did we mention there's also a girls' school that shares the site?) performed a challenging repertoire. There's a vast array of extracurricular activities – the computing society are just back from a tour of Google's London HQ and the popular CCF celebrated its centenary in 2014. 'No boy is ever bored at Habs,' says head Peter Hamilton. 'This is an environment where it is normal to excel.'

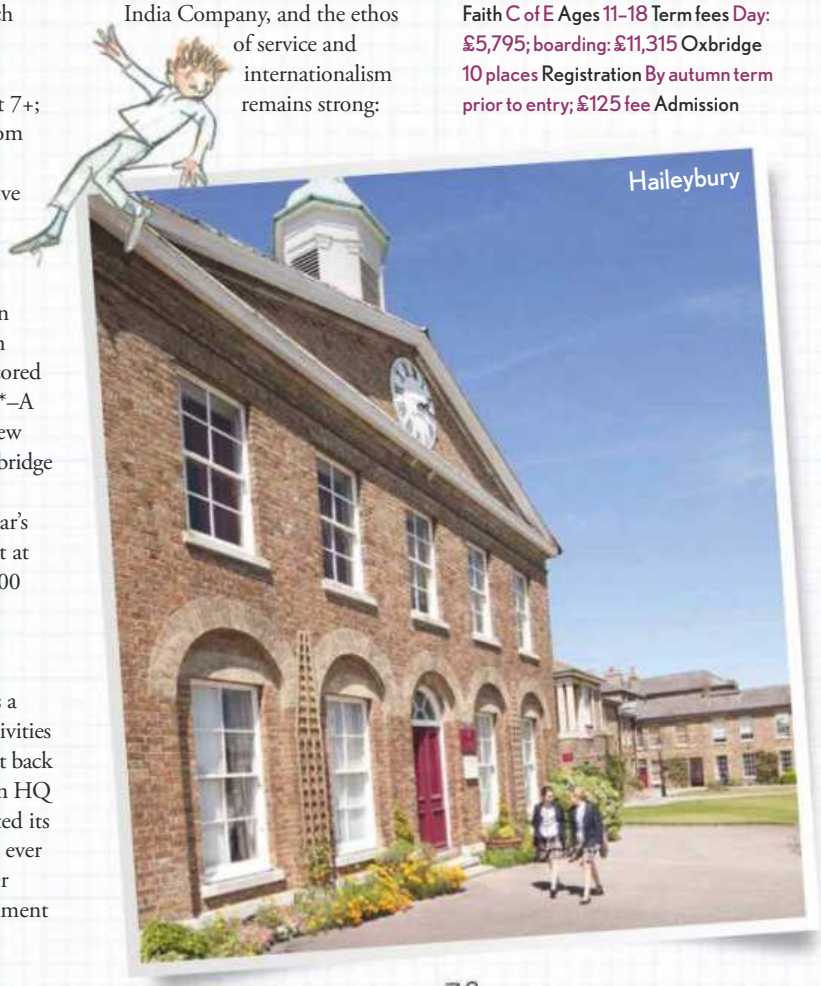
Haileybury

Hertford, Hertfordshire SG13 7NU

Website haileybury.com

Head Joe Davies, MA, since 2009; previously head of Sutton Valence School, Kent Pupils 772. Day: 156 boys, 105 girls; boarding: 283 boys, 228 girls Faith C of E Ages 11–18 Term fees Day: £7,740; boarding: £10,300 Oxbridge 3 places Registration At least a year before entry; £100 fee Admission School's own exam, previous school's report and interview Alumni Clement Attlee, director Christopher Nolan

Head Joe Davies is a rugby fan and is clearly delighted that Haileybury will be the official team base of the US and Argentina teams during the Rugby World Cup – need we say more about the facilities? Sport at Haileybury is cracking: pupils are GB hockey players and sailors and one Year 11 boy has been signed to Red Bull's Formula 3 team. They draft in international stars to coach too, and former Welsh player and Lion Michael Owen heads up rugby. The school was founded as a training college for the East India Company, and the ethos of service and internationalism remains strong: our spy notes, 'It is clear why pupils leave as socially responsible citizens.' We love the interactive blue plaques dotted around the grounds with links to websites that recall the most distinguished alumni. The campus has a collegiate feel; girls' house Hailey has been refurbished and the new music-school extension is very swish, with slate floors, a glass atrium and a Costa Coffee. Even the staff have their own rock band, and the college organist performed all of Bach's 270 pieces on the school organ last year. There was a slight dip in A-level results in 2014 (79 per cent A*–B), but in the IB over a quarter of pupils scored 39+ points (one achieving 45) and three won Oxbridge places. It's no wonder we've hearing more and more heads praising Haileybury to the rafters.



Headington School

Headington Road, Oxford OX3 7TD

Website headington.org

Head Caroline Jordan, MA, since 2011; previously head of St George's Ascot Pupils 781 girls: 575 day, 206 boarding Faith C of E Ages 11–18 Term fees Day: £5,795; boarding: £11,315 Oxbridge 10 places Registration By autumn term prior to entry; £125 fee Admission CE or school's own exam and interview Alumnae Paralympian Lily van den Broecke, Emma Watson

Prep: Head Jane Crouch Pupils 280 girls Ages 3–11 Term fees Day: £4,150; boarding: £8,745

It's Headington's centenary this year and the celebrations have been plentiful, which is only fitting for this excellent Oxford institution. Headington is big (800 girls) but has a small, highly cosmopolitan boarding contingent – 47 nationalities at the last count. There is a distinct blue-stocking vibe in the air, and girls hit life head on. Headington is the top girls' rowing school in the country for a sixth consecutive year, with a total of 41 national medals to its name. It was also the first girls' school to enter in the Student Robotics competition (54 teams from three countries), and they only went and won the whole darned thing on their second outing. They do IB and A-level here to great effect: last year they had an average point score of 39.8 in the former (one girl obtaining the celebrated 45 out of 45) and 85 per cent A*–B in the latter. There is always a healthy Oxbridge quota, but six girls left to study architecture last year and nine to pursue medicine, dentistry or veterinary science. Headington's facilities are ace and they've recently opened a stonking dance and fitness centre – rumoured to be as good as it gets in Europe. It's not all intense: head Caroline Jordan is very hot on peer support, communication and dealing with teenage girls in general. There is also light relief in the form of debating (and discos) with Magdalen and Radley.

Heathfield School

London Road, Ascot, Berkshire SL5 8BQ

Website heathfieldschool.net

Head Jo Heywood, BSc, since 2009; previously deputy head Pupils 200 girls, all boarding Faith C of E Ages 11–18 Term fees £11,100 Oxbridge Occasional Registration 18 months before entry; £200 fee Admission School's own exam and interview Alumnae Isabella Blow, Sienna Miller, Tamara Mellon

Our elite spy network has received lots of intel on how Heathfield is buzzing at the moment. It's a small,

traditional school – a place where girls value their badges, customs and privileges – but there's been a lot going on of late, including an image overhaul. Just check out the video on its website. There's also a new director of studies and director of pastoral and co-curricular; new drop-in subject clinics; a new careers conference; and a new volunteering programme. A new STEM facility is about to open, and they now want to improve the junior girls' and staff accommodation. Heathfield is already the only school to partner with the London College of Fashion (a result of their artistic prowess) and girls receive help with their portfolios and are guaranteed an interview at the college. Head Jo Heywood has really set her sights on improving academic standards and – hey presto! – leavers scored a much-improved 77 per cent A*–B at A-level last year. Heathfield was all-boarding but has started to take 'day boarders' too. Nevertheless, expect the packed schedule of a full-boarding institution. Clubs range from coding to horror films and knitting. The 1st lacrosse team reached the quarters of the nationals last year and two pupils are in the GB dressage squad. Staff entertained their charges with a 'secret' panto on founder's day. Touches like this are *very* Heathfield and make the girls extremely loyal to their school.

Hurtwood House

Holmbury St Mary, Dorking, Surrey RH5 6NU

Website hurtwoodhouse.com
Head Cosmo Jackson, BEd, since 2003; previously economics and business teacher **Pupils** 340. Day: 20 boys, 20 girls; boarding: 140 boys, 160 girls **Faith** Non-denom **Ages** 16–18 **Term fees** Day: £8,790; boarding: £13,185 **Oxbridge** 5 places **Registration** No deadline; £1,000 fee **Admission** Interview and reference **Alumni** Emily Blunt, Jack Huston

Let's get the fees out of the way first: you pay around £13,000 a term for the privilege of studying here. But what you get is a sixth-form boarding education unlike any other. The school, says our spy, is 'a fascinating one-off'. You wind four miles down country lanes to get to this beautiful Edwardian mansion, set in 200 acres, with fabulous views over open countryside. Richard Jackson founded the school in 1970; one of his sons, Cosmo, is now head and the other, Ted, is a housemaster. There's no cliquiness, because half the school is new each year; up to 90 per cent of pupils are first-time boarders. Hurtwood is well known for its excellence in the performing arts, but – in Cosmo Jackson's words – you'd be wrong to dismiss it as 'a flouncy, creative place': maths and English A-levels are just as popular as media and drama, and last year's A-level results were an impressive 87 per cent A*–B grades; 60 per cent of pupils go on to Russell Group universities, a healthy cohort to art school and fewer than you might expect to drama school. Drama is a 'hobby for most HH students not a career path'. Quite some hobby: last year's *Chicago* cost £75,000 to stage and was live-streamed for overseas parents. Sport isn't huge here: Richard Jackson is a QPR fan, so the footie kit is in QPR colours and, says Cosmo, 'they play like them'.


The King's School

The King's School

Canterbury, Kent CT1 2ES

Website kings-school.co.uk
Head Peter Roberts, MA, since 2011; previously head of Bradfield College **Pupils** 828. Day: 119 boys, 73 girls; boarding: 335 boys, 299 girls **Faith** C of E **Ages** 13–18 **Term fees** Day: £8,685; boarding: £11,480 **Oxbridge** 17 places **Registration** Two years before entry advised; £200 fee **Admission** CE or school's own exam and interview **Alumni** Orlando Bloom, Somerset Maugham

Prep: Head Peter Wells **Pupils** 384 day and boarding: 212 boys, 172 girls **Ages** 3–13 **Term fees** Day: £5,745; boarding: £7,885

'An utterly delightful place,' says an insider. 'A sleeping giant waking up.' King's is on a big marketing drive to attract more London parents – please note, it's only an hour from St Pancras. Head Peter Roberts is a one-off, sporting red braces and fluorescent green socks when we visited. 'He's unusual in a really good way,' said our pupil guide. 'Very eloquent, very involved, brimming with energy. He gives the school its atmosphere.' The location helps too, of course – school and city are intertwined, with the glorious cathedral smack in the middle and seagulls croaking overhead. (Easy to hop to Paris for gallery visits). Communication with parents is, we're told, 'exemplary' – 'nothing goes unnoticed'. Pupils really like their quirky uniform (wing collars, pinstripes); prefects are distinguished by their long flowing purple gowns – 'a huge privilege,' one told us. They work hard (86 per cent A*–B last year), but there's 'equal kudos for all' – art, music and drama are just as important as academic achievement. And wow, what music. This is, says Mr Roberts, one of the top three music schools in the country. The school's annual arts festival, King's Week, is a blast – over 40 events last year, involving 400-plus performers. Caveat: don't ask a King's pupil for directions – it's a school tradition to misdirect the baffled.

Magdalen College School

Cowley Place, Oxford OX4 1DZ

Website mcsoxford.org
Head Dr Tim Hands, DPhil, since 2008; previously head of Portsmouth Grammar School **Pupils** 794 day: 734 boys, 60 girls **Faith** C of E **Ages** 11–18 **Term fees** £5,425 **Oxbridge** 42 places **Registration** By October of year before entry; £75 fee **Admission** CE or school's own exam and interview **Alumni** Sir Thomas More, Ivor Novello, Sam Mendes, Ben Goldacre

Prep: Head Tim Skipwith **Pupils** 139 day boys **Ages** 7–11 **Term fees** £5,425

It seems that Magdalen's position at the top of the academic tree is unassailable. A rival headmaster calls it 'an all-round class act'. They send proportionately more pupils to Oxbridge than any other school in the country (joint with Oxford



High; see below). That was a tremendous 42 pupils in 2014; A-levels were 87 per cent A*–A. This is a local day school of the most excellent calibre (by the way, there is no Saturday school), though it helps that home is the city of dreaming spires and that dons lend a hand – for example, helping pupils with their 5,000-word Waynflete Studies programme in sixth form. It's things like this, and the specialist careers conferences for law, engineering and computer science, that lure clever girls from top Oxford schools into Magdalen's co-ed sixth form. Head (and HMC chairman) Timothy Hands prevents the school becoming a hothouse with exemplary pastoral care and young, vibrant staff. Sport is just as important as classwork: they have 61 county representatives; the U15 rugby team is unbeaten; and there's a joint Sussex and Oxfordshire county-cricket development programme. Last year, boys wowed Oxford with performances of Holst's *The Planets* and Purcell's *King Arthur* at the Sheldonian Theatre, and *Alice in Wonderland* at the Oxford Playhouse. Phase one of Dr Hands's masterplan to redesign the school over a 25-year period has been approved. Alas, he won't be around to see it – he's off to be the new head of Winchester College, no less, starting next September.


New Hall School

New Hall School

The Avenue, Boreham, Chelmsford CM3 3HS ●●

Website newhallschool.co.uk
Head Katherine Jeffrey, MA, since 2001; previously deputy head of the Marist School, Ascot **Pupils** 813. Day: 293 boys, 283 girls; boarding: 104 boys, 133 girls **Faith** RC **Ages** 11–18 **Term fees** Day: £6,014; boarding: £9,234 **Oxbridge** 4 places **Registration** By October of year before entry; £80 fee **Admission** School's own exam, previous school's report and interview **Alumni** Christiane Amanpour, Anya Hindmarch
Prep: **Head** Katherine Jeffrey **Pupils** 344 day and boarding: 158 boys, 186 girls **Ages** 3–11 **Term fees** Day: £4,405; boarding: £6,507

New Hall is one of the oldest Catholic schools in the country and it's a choice option in Essex. Head Katherine Jeffrey is 'impressive, oozing with confidence and efficiency', according to our spy. Home is a Tudor pile set in 85 acres on the edge of Chelmsford – the 'palace' once belonged to Henry VIII and his arms are still in the school chapel. New Hall is one of those schools that follows a nifty 'diamond model': co-ed prep and sixth form, with single-sex lessons from ages 11–16. (The prep is bang next door; roughly two-thirds move on to the senior school.) And the model clearly works: A-levels were 77 per cent A*–B last year and, contrary to national trends, the boys' performance matches that of the girls. Boarding numbers aren't huge but you choose between full, flexi and weekly, and by sixth form 50 per cent of pupils live in. They are big on sport here: some of the best boys' school tennis in the UK; one boy was selected for England U18 rugby; their coaches include a two-time Olympic hockey player and a London Irish rugby star. A highlight of last year was when politics students visited the US Congress in Washington and also got to cheer on the Redskins (American football – but of course you knew that).



The Oratory School

Woodcote, Reading RG8 0PJ ●

Website oratory.co.uk
Head Adrian Wyles, BSc, since September; previously academic deputy head at Sutton Valence School, Kent **Pupils** 410 boys: 205 day, 205 boarding **Faith** RC **Ages** 11–18 **Term fees** Day: £7,750; boarding: £10,650 **Oxbridge** Occasional **Registration** Two years before entry advised; £50 fee **Admission** CE or school's own exam and interview **Alumni** Composer Lord Berkeley, Hilaire Belloc
Prep: **Head** Joseph Smith **Pupils** 435 day and boarding: 280 boys, 155 girls **Ages** 2–13 **Term fees** Day: £4,850; boarding: £7,250

Founded by Cardinal John Henry Newman in 1859, the Oratory is the only Catholic, all-boys boarding school left in the land and it still marches to his philosophy – to nourish the mind and the soul in equal measure. It feels a balanced place – a mother rejoices that the school 'has not succumbed to the admissions fever of pre-testing'. Clive Dytor, a wonderful character and former *Tatler* award-winner, has retired as head and will be much missed. New head Adrian Wyles has arrived from Sutton Valence School in Kent. Pupils are solid academically (65 per cent A*–B at A-level), but the Oratory is also the perfect home for the sporty or arty type and life is set at a brisk pace. Rugger and CCF loom large; one boy recently won an air-cadet scholarship. With the grounds so close to the Thames and Henley, rowing is shipshape too. The art on show has to be seen to be believed and the school holds Foundation Course status. Facilities here are wondrous, particularly the new sports hall, and the dorms are downright luxurious. It's exactly 50/50 day and boarding, and boys are energetic, polished and articulate. The Oratory Prep, down the road, is co-ed; girls depart to good local day and boarding outfits, with most of the boys moving to the senior school.

Oxford High School

Belbroughton Road, Oxford OX2 6XA ●

Website oxfordhigh.gdst.net
Head Judith Carlisle, BA, since 2011; previously head of Dover Grammar School for Girls **Pupils** 569 day girls **Faith** Non-denom **Ages** 11–18 **Term fees** £4,558 **Oxbridge** 18 places **Registration** By October of year before entry; £100 fee **Admission** School's own exam, previous school's report and interview **Alumnae** Emma Bridgewater, Margaret Hodge, Dame Maggie Smith
Prep: **Head** Ellie Stacey **Ages** 4–11 **Pupils** 327 day girls **Term fees** £3,462

The Department of Education says that if you send your daughter to Oxford High, she is more likely to

win an Oxbridge place than if she went to any other school in the country. This day school has the most sparkling of educational records: a third of A-levels were graded A* last year. They do things with flair too. Take the girl who won a best commercial potential award at the Emerging Tech Weekender for Brush!, a toothbrush that tells parents whether children are caring for their teeth. Success is not just confined to the classroom: Oxford High are county netball and tennis champions; they have national representatives in everything from biathlon to squash; and the design and artwork is of degree standard. 'We achieve whatever we want,' says one girl – and she's not joking. But believe us: the atmosphere is genuinely relaxed. We are big fans of head Judith Carlisle's campaign against 'unhelpful perfectionism'. The message is that high grades are all well and good but not at the cost of emotional wellbeing. Oxford High runs from reception to 18, and Mrs Carlisle has consolidated a whole-school approach to bring the junior and senior branches together. The facilities are excellent – a new science lab and outdoor performance area are being built – but it's not a beautiful place. No matter, what with those rather inspiring Oxford colleges nearby.

Prior's Field

Priorsfield Road, Godalming, Surrey GU7 2RH

Website priorsfieldschool.com
Head Tracy Kirnig, MA, since September; previously deputy head of Caterham School **Pupils** 456 girls: 346 day, 110 boarding **Faith** Non-denom **Ages** 11–18 **Term fees** Day: £5,555; boarding: £9,355 **Oxbridge** Occasional **Registration** By November of year before entry; £100 fee **Admission** School's own exam, previous school's report and interview **Alumnae** Lily James, Baroness Warnock

Surrey is packed with many excellent independent schools and Prior's Field might be described as the quirky one. It has become exceedingly popular: the school roll has increased from 280 to 450 in six years. It's a nurturing place and previous head Julie Roseblade built an excellent mentoring scheme; her overriding message was, 'Girls need to look after each other.' A parent told us: 'It's the nicest school I've ever come across.' New head Tracy Kirnig comes from another Surrey favourite, Caterham, and will doubtless be interviewed on Girls Allowed, the school's very own radio station. It's these little unusual touches that make Prior's Field so special, like awarding Topshop vouchers or teddies for good work; or the annual MasterChef competition; or the sensory garden, with a willow cabin and listening post. Last year, Sir Ranulph Fiennes visited to deliver the annual Huxley Lecture (Aldous's mother, Julia, founded the school). The school's intake is broad, and results in 2014 were 68 per cent A*–B at A-level; girls brought home a haul of maths and science awards too. Prior's Field's athletes are in peak condition; four pupils are Surrey champions in track and field, and one girl is the U15 national triathlon champion. About 30 per cent of pupils board and the junior boarding house has been refurbished with 'extra squishy carpets' at the pupils' request.

Queen Anne's School

Henley Road, Caversham, Berkshire RG4 6DX

Website qas.org.uk
Head Julia Harrington, BA, since 2006; previously deputy head of Prior's Field **Pupils** 450 girls: 225 day, 225 boarding **Faith** C of E **Ages** 11–18 **Term fees** Day: £7,025; boarding: £10,350 **Oxbridge** Occasional **Registration** Early registration advised; £100 fee **Admission** CE and assessment **Alumnae** Illustrator Posy Simmonds, Jenny Seagrove

There's a lightness of touch to Queen Anne's which we love. An insider says there's a 'winning atmosphere' – girls are charm personified and seem to get on wonderfully. What's not to love about a school that created a periodic table out of cake as a clever way of learning, or that let a girl be headmistress for a day? QAS girls play England lacrosse and the sport here is fab: netball is flying; they are U15 tennis county champions; and a synchronised swimmer is aspiring to an England place. Music is catching up: one girl is a lead saxophonist with the National Youth Jazz Orchestra, and everyone who took IGCSE music achieved an A*. A-level results dipped a bit last year to 66 per cent A*–B – we'll take that as a blip – but one girl landed a place at Brown University. No doubt the new sixth-form centre with digital-learning zone and learning pods will sharpen focus. Head Julia Harrington says, 'Life is an opportunity and our girls rise to it!' Boarding is very flexible – a night or two in, a night or two at home – and therefore very appealing for some families. The food is deliciously healthy and they love a bit of fancy dress, as do we.

Radley College

Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 2HR

Website radley.org.uk
Head John Moule, MA, since 2014; previously head of Bedford School **Pupils** 690 boys, all boarding **Faith** C of E **Ages** 13–18 **Term fees** £11,475 **Oxbridge** 16 places **Registration** From birth; £100 fee **Admission** CE if registered early; otherwise via the Warden's List or scholarship exam **Alumni** Peter Cook, Andrew Motion

'Provocative' and 'forward-thinking' might not be the first words that spring to mind when you think of Radley – unless, that is, you happened to catch the recent Tracey Emin exhibition in its new Wandsworth-worthy coffee shop ('some material of an explicit nature', warned the private-view invitation). New head John Moule


Prior's Field



is, in the words of a prep school head, 'a great guy'. He's keen to modernise Radley without making significant changes: 'Why fix what isn't broken?' he says. All eyes are on the admissions process: as it stands, you still have to get your boy's name down at birth or take your chances with the Warden's List (boys nominated by the head), but Mr Moule admits this is untenable. Watch this space. In the meantime, he's busy getting to know his current pupils, year group by year group, their evening meetings enhanced by Mrs Moule's legendary chocolate brownies. Radley is small (fewer than 700 boys), secluded (a beautiful, quiet campus) and traditional (you have to get the lingo – houses here are 'socials', denoted by colours on the gowns and ties). Given the school's entry system, its academic results are outstanding – 90 per cent A*–B at A-level last year. 'They instil a superb work ethic into each and every boy,' says an observer. The sporting facilities and results are splendiferous, and they're putting the finishing touches to the new indoor rowing centre. 'It's charming in every way,' says a spy. 'I thought Radley would be a braying, red-cord-wearing nightmare,' says a mother of four prospective pupils. 'But I was really blown away by it.'

Roedean School

Roedean Way, Brighton BN2 5RQ ●

Website roedean.co.uk

Head Oliver Blond, BA, since 2013; previously head of Henrietta Barnett School, London **Pupils** 453 girls: Day: 189; boarding: 264 **Faith** Non-denom **Ages** 11–18 **Term fees** Day: £6,490; boarding: £11,650 **Oxbridge** 4 places **Registration** By November of year before entry; £150 fee **Admission** School's own exam and interview **Alumnae** Politician Katy Bourne, Beatrix Ong, actress Honeysuckle Weeks

The approach to Roedean's austere building, dramatically perched on a cliff, sure is intimidating but, never fear, inside it really is a friendly place. The spectacularly stylish refurbishment of the boarding houses is the talk of the town – they are more boutique hotel than dormitory. These houses and the new weekly- and flexi-boarding packages are luring in a larger contingent of British families than in previous years. In the classroom, everything is going swimmingly, and girls scored 79 per cent A*–B at A-level last year. Terrific sports results too: pupils play international table tennis and water polo and have won gold medals in county athletics championships. The school day has been rejigged to allow more time for lunch and after-school activities, plus each afternoon now ends with tea in the houses, so that day girls, boarders and staff can hang out together. Class sizes and tutor groups are small too, so it's all very tight-knit. Head Oliver Blond, who has been here two years, wants Roedean girls to 'think differently' and, to that end, Years 7–9 now do the Triple H programme – head (thinking), hand (creating) and heart (serving). There's a new community-action enterprise and a new co-ed initiative, with activities like mixed lacrosse and street dance. All these brilliant ideas make sure Roedean girls don't stay isolated in their ivory tower – or on that cliff.

St Catherine's Bramley

Station Road, Bramley, Guildford, Surrey GU5 0DF ●

Website stcatherines.info

Head Alice Phillips, MA, since 2000; previously deputy head at Tormead School, Guildford **Pupils** 634 girls: 497 day, 137 boarding **Faith** C of E **Ages** 11–18 **Term fees** Day: £5,735; boarding: £9,445 **Oxbridge** 12 places **Registration** By October of year before entry; £100 fee **Admission** School's own exam and previous school's report **Alumnae** Juliet Stevenson, poet UA Fanthorpe

Prep: **Head** Naomi Bartholomew **Pupils** 264 day girls **Ages** 4–11 **Term fees** £4,760

Since their school's debut in the Guide last year, these gutsy Guildford girls have been slaying all before them on the sports field: they're national lacrosse and rounders champions, and county netball and tennis champions, and three girls took to the high seas to win the Young Sailor Trophy in the Isle of Wight Round the Island Race. St Catherine's academic results are equally triumphant – 91 per cent A*–B at A-level last year, a touch up from 2013. STEM subjects are popular and with any luck will be bolstered by the scheduled spruce-up of the science labs (much needed, our insider noted) to catch up with the other fab facilities. The girls are glowing about their 'incredible and inspiring' head Alice Phillips, who is VP of the Girls' School association – she tells us that she is all for boys, but their interaction with her girls is strictly limited to biology symposiums at Winchester, not discos. Trips are exotic: the swimming team zipped off to Lanzarote and upper-sixth girls took part in an Australian exchange. Girls can start off in St Catherine's Prep at four but must sit an exam at 11 to move on. Those who stay all the way until 18 are affectionately known as 'lifers'. A small number board, but for the day girls there is stacks of added value – 'we are open all hours,' says the school.

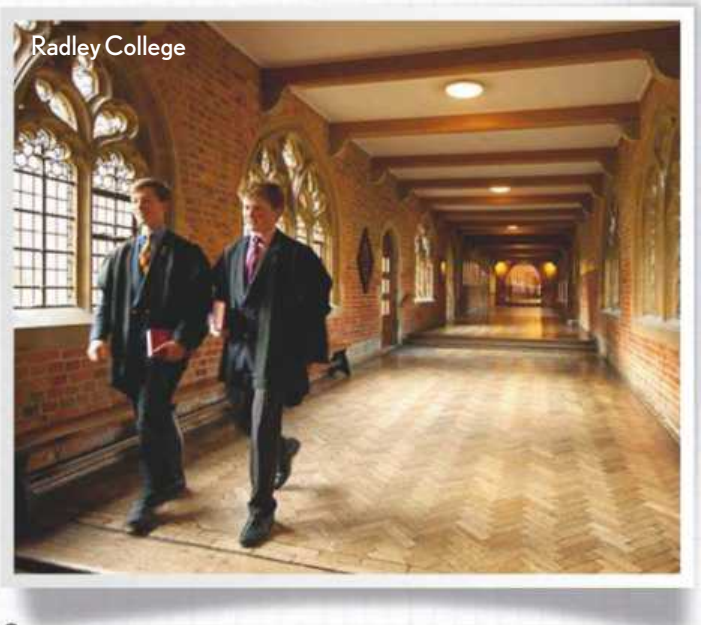
St Edward's Oxford

Woodstock Road, Oxford OX2 7NN ● ●

Website stedwardsoxford.org

Head Stephen Jones, MLitt, since 2011; previously head of Dover College **Pupils** 662. Day: 80 boys, 28 girls; boarding: 316 boys, 238 girls **Faith** C of E **Ages** 13–18 **Term fees** Day: £9,238; boarding: £11,544 **Oxbridge** 2 places **Registration** Three years prior to entry; £75 fee **Admission** CE or school's own exam **Alumni** Sir Douglas Bader, Holly Branson, Kenneth Grahame

Officially, it's called St Edward's but obviously everyone knows it's really Teddies. The school is north-Oxford smart, with elegant red-brick buildings and lots of



Radley College

green space, and it remains true to its co-ed, broad-based ethos. Both A-levels and IB are offered; 72 per cent A*–B at A-level last year and an IB average point score of 37.1. Head Stephen Jones is a good sort and has been fine-tuning the academic programme: there is a special shell (first year) curriculum; the Warden's Project helps prepare pupils for the IB extended essay and EPQ; and they've sharpened up study skills and careers coaching. Teddies always leads the field in art and drama. The school has its own resident theatre company and took two plays to the Edinburgh Fringe. They also put on *His Dark Materials* last year, and author Philip Pullman came to consult with the crew during rehearsals. We love the school's interaction with the Oxford community – the sports centre and North Wall Arts Centre (where that fabulous drama happens) are open to the public. A new music facility is being built along the same lines. The 1st XI boys' cricket team beat all the big names last year, including the Oxford University Blues, while the U16 hockey girls are county champs. Most pupils board and travel across the country to be here. The ensuite bathrooms in the senior girls' boarding house often seal the deal.

St George's Ascot

Wells Lane, Ascot, Berkshire SL5 7DZ

Website st-georges-ascot.org.uk **Head** Rachel Owens, MA, since 2011; previously vice-principal at New Hall School **Pupils** 270 girls: 167 day, 103 boarding **Faith** C of E **Ages** 11–18 **Term fees** Day: £6,900; boarding: £10,675 **Oxbridge** Occasional **Registration** By October of year before entry; £100 fee **Admission** CE or school's own exam **Alumnae** Princess Beatrice, Kirsty Gallacher

St George's say they are 'looking for girls who have sparkly eyes', so it's only fitting that this sparkly troupe won the Spirit of the Game prize at the Junior Netball Festival in Disneyland Paris. The creative and performing arts here are a cut above the rest: *Oliver!* was the big production last year, and winning a place at Central Saint Martins is par for the course. The school is not hugely academically selective but has great value-added scores, and pupils achieved 72 per cent A*–B at A-level last year. St George's calls itself a 'bespoke school' on account of its small size. This is a friendly, everyone-knows-everyone kind of place but splendid headmistress Rachel Owens has been encouraging her pupils and staff to 'have a go' a bit more and really put themselves on the line. For example, there are initiatives like 'medical day' to encourage applications to study medicine at university, plus an exchange programme with a school in Melbourne. There is a sizeable boarding contingent (most weekly), and parents are locals or Londoners – on Sunday evenings there is a handy bus back to school from South Ken and Chiswick. The school is attentive to those things that really count – the san is full of fluffy duvets and big beds, and the food is divine.


St Edward's Oxford

St Helen & St Katharine

Faringdon Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 1BE

Website shsk.org.uk **Head** Rebecca Dougall, MA, since January; previously head of the Royal School, Bath **Pupils** 717 day girls **Faith** C of E **Ages** 9–18 **Term fees** £4,730 **Oxbridge** 10 places **Registration** One year before entry advised; £80 fee **Admission** School's own exam, interview and previous school's report **Alumnae** Samantha Cameron, journalist Alice Thomson

The girls at this Oxfordshire day school are pretty used to the upper realms of the league tables and scored a terrific 93 per cent A*–B at A-level last year. The sporting laurels have been heaped high of late too: the 1st tennis team reached the national schools' finals; girls were U13 UK schools' biathlon runners-up, and one is a world tap-dancing champion. It won't surprise you to hear that admission is academically selective. Years 5 and 6 are small and mainly for pupils applying from state primaries; the big intakes are at 11 and at sixth form. The older girls set the tone of life at the school, and the sixth-formers we met were chatty and confident but didn't take themselves too seriously. Girls share bus routes and put on dramatic extravaganzas with the Abingdon boys, who are just next door. The food is scrumptious – there are gooey cookies in the café or chef Olivier might rustle up some sushi for a history party. New headmistress Rebecca Dougall arrived in January from the Royal High School, Bath, so we await her plans for the future. A new CDT building has just opened to accompany the £7m science centre, plus a makeover of the sports facilities will be completed next September. We loved both the fabric and the heart of St Helen's – and the fees are very reasonable too.

St Mary's Ascot

St Mary's Road, Ascot, Berkshire SL5 9JF

Website st-marys-ascot.co.uk **Head** Mary Breen, MSc, since 1999; previously head of physics at Eton College **Pupils** 385 girls: 12 day, 373 boarding **Faith** RC **Ages** 11–18 **Term fees** Day: £8,110; boarding: £11,390 **Oxbridge** 14 places **Registration** At least two years before entry; £200 fee **Admission** School's own exam and interview **Alumnae** Olga Polizzi, Charlotte Hogg, Lady Antonia Fraser

St Mary's has so many things going for it. At the very top of the list: headmistress Mary Breen who, in her 16 years here, has seen the school rise and rise. It has always been (and always will be) all girls, all Catholic, full-boarding. Applicants must be Roman Catholic (who have priority entrance) or ready to buy into the faith-based education. It's full up, so register at least two years before entry because they close the books at two

applicants per place. Despite the broad intake, the results are simply staggering – 95 per cent A*–B at A-level last year, 14 Oxbridge places, plus others heading to UPenn, Duke and NYU. A new all-weather athletics track opened last year and, despite St Mary's small size, they punch above their weight on the sports field, particularly in tennis, netball and hockey, and the ski team brought back 10 medals from the British Schools Ski Championships in Flaine. There are eight drama productions a year and lots of dance too. But the school's real secret lies in the friendly, family feel. One spy remarks: 'It's the healthiest, most caring environment for girls you'll find.' Mary Berry opened the new dining room, and we're told the food is now superb, though we're sure visits to the school shop SMASH haven't diminished. The acid test is that no one wants to leave for sixth form. One girl said: 'It just keeps getting better'.

St Swithun's School

Alresford Road, Winchester, Hampshire SO21 1HA

Website stswithuns.com
Head Jane Gandee, MA, since 2010; previously director of studies at City of London School for Girls Pupils 513 girls: 282 day, 231 boarding Faith C of E Ages 11–18 Term fees Day: £6,335; boarding: £10,151 Oxbridge 9 places Registration By June of year before entry; £100 fee Admission CE, assessment and previous school's report Alumnae Actress Emma Chambers, author Bella Pollen
Prep: Head Pim Grimes Pupils 185 girls Ages 3–11 Term fees £4,141

In head Jane Gandee, St Swithun's has got a good 'un. 'Impressive,' says an observer. 'I sense she runs the school with an iron rod but there's no harm in that.' Mrs Gandee says: 'I believe that girls should live and learn with self-confidence and not need to worry too much at this time in their lives.' St Swithun's is not particularly selective but does get terribly good results – 93 per cent A*–B at A-level last year; nine Oxbridge places. Lacrosse here is extremely good; one girl is in the U16 GB eventing team, while another is training with the English Schools' ski squad. Winchester is handily nearby to provide co-ed entertainment – Wykehamists came to St Swithun's Netherfield Ball for fine dining and dancing, regency-style. The school buildings are a little austere but they belie the camaraderie of the place. 'Families' – where girls have a 'mother', 'grandmother', 'great-grandmother' even – help young ones settle in. On the facilities front, the DT department knocks the socks off those in many boys' schools, and a number of boarding houses have been refurbished (NB weekends are quite quiet here). An entirely new junior-school building has also just opened, with a huge demand for places. However, there's no automatic transfer to big school – that would be too easy.

Sevenoaks School

High Street, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1HU

Website sevenoaksschool.org
Head Katy Ricks, MA, since 2002; previously deputy head of Highgate School Pupils 1,047. Day: 329 boys, 370 girls; boarding: 171 boys, 177 girls Faith Inter-denom Ages 11–18 Term fees Day: £6,921; boarding: £11,052 Oxbridge 31 places Registration Two years before entry; £100 fee Admission CE or school's own exam, interview and previous school's report Alumni Sir Daniel Day-Lewis, Emma Hope

Sevenoaks is not an international school per se, but it delivers a truly international – and superb – education. Boys and girls hail from 45 different countries and the school has taught the IB since 1978 – long before everyone else jumped on the bandwagon. Students also take the SSC – Sevenoaks School Certificate, a more rigorous alternative to GCSEs. The results are staggering: nine pupils achieved 45 points in the IB (only 150 do so globally); 22 pupils scored 44. More than 30 pupils are off to Oxbridge, and another 30 to top US and Canadian universities. They play national-level sport and have art exhibited at the Royal Academy, naturally. The facilities? 'Phenomenal,' says our spy – and they are gearing up to build a new sixth-form centre. Boarding is co-ed in Years 7 and 8 and sixth form, single sex in between; we're told the boarders and the big day contingent get on like a house on fire. Star head Katy Ricks leads from the front: 'She sets very high standards and has great ambition,' says a fellow member of staff. Of the school's service and community involvement (key to the IB), Mrs Ricks says: 'Social contributions are not gestures – they are truthfully part of students' lives.' Our insider describes the school as 'interesting, inspiring and welcoming' – you can add 'world class' to that.

DID YOU KNOW?

They adore the school, now buy them the onesie – yes, Tonbridge has produced its own cosy jumpsuit. There are matching boxer shorts too

Stowe School

Stowe, Buckinghamshire MK18 5EH

Website stowe.co.uk
Head Dr Anthony Wallersteiner, PhD, since 2003; previously head of history at Tonbridge School Pupils 769. Day: 65 boys, 46 girls; boarding: 438 boys, 220 girls Faith C of E Ages 13–18 Term fees Day: £7,980; boarding £11,100 Oxbridge 3 places Registration At least three years before entry; £100 fee Admission CE or school's own exam, interview and previous school's report Alumni Sir Richard Branson, David Niven, Henry Cavill

Anthony Wallersteiner has been head of Stowe for 12 years but he assures us he still has a lot to do – no sign that he's going to jump ship any time soon. This is a liberal, innovative school, where the focus is on – in Dr W's words – maintaining the 'individual nature of a Stoic'. He tells us he can't remember a time when he's turned down a pupil's idea, be it motorcycle scrambling club or mindfulness society – the more unusual the better, as long


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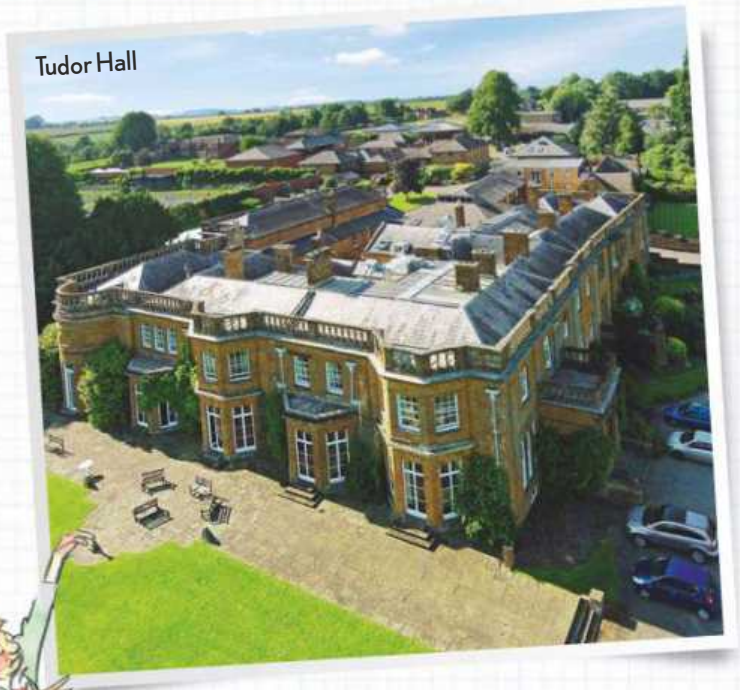
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Tudor Hall



as the student is prepared to organise and run it. Academic standards are rising every year, and entrance is increasingly selective (the average CE pass is now 75 per cent). There's an incredible array of sporting opportunities and societies: six pupils play England rugby at U18, U17 and U16; the school runs three polo teams; and beagling is still very popular. That said, there's a wider demographic here than you might think – of the 769 pupils, 300 are on bursaries. And as for the school itself and its acres of parkland, our spy says: 'It's all stunning.' There's an impressive new music school – pupils played with the National Russian Orchestra at its grand unveiling; one sixth-former has just released his debut EP. Future plans include a new science centre. A 1967 Routemaster bus ferries pupils between the main school and the games fields, to the envy of visiting sports teams.

Tonbridge School

Tonbridge, Kent TN9 1JP ●
Website tonbridge-school.co.uk
Head Tim Haynes, BA, since 2005; previously head of Monmouth School
Pupils 789 boys: 328 day, 461 boarding
Faith C of E Ages 13–18 Term fees Day: £9,072; boarding: £12,096
Oxbridge 26 places Registration At least three years before entry; £150 fee Admission Pre-assessment and interview, CE or school's own exam
Alumni Frederick Forsyth, Dan Stevens

'Possibly the finest campus I've come across,' says our well-travelled spy, who admired Tonbridge's handsome Victorian buildings and 150 acres of playing fields. A new addition in 2016 will be the Library Learning Centre, a four-storey information hub. Tonbridge is already very good with learning, and achieved its best-ever GCSE results in 2014 with a tremendous 94 per cent A*–A (the average score was eight A*s and two As), and 26 boys won Oxbridge places. But head Tim Haynes cares not a jot about league tables, and he likes the fact that the school has slightly under-the-radar status, despite being one of the country's top all-boys boarding outfits. Pupils are predominantly from London and the South-East, with 10 per cent from overseas. There are seven boarding houses plus five for day boys, and they all dine in-house. Sport, particularly rugby and cricket, is really outstanding. Boys are very involved with the local community and volunteer every Wednesday. The inaugural exhibition at the new art gallery was so cutting edge it featured works by Chris Ofili and Sir Antony Gormley. Our spy thought the boys were 'charming, amusing and attentive' – we love all of those characteristics.

Tudor Hall

Wykham Park, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX16 9UR ●
Website tudorhallschool.com
Head Wendy Griffiths, BSc, since 2004; previously director of studies at St Catherine's, Bramley Pupils 333 girls: 74 day, 259 boarding Faith C of E Ages 11–18 Term fees Day: £6,615; boarding £10,370 Oxbridge Occasional Registration Two years before entry advised; £100 fee Admission CE or school's own exam and previous school's report Alumnae Penelope Chilvers, banker Nicola Pease, Julia Peyton-Jones

We like head Wendy Griffiths, who describes Tudor Hall as a 'traditional model but bang up-to-date', and the school really looks quintessentially English rose: Cotswold stone, walled gardens and grazing cows. Girls say they love the small size and that 'it's relaxed but buzzing and such fun'. There are modern improvements afoot: a new drama studio and science block were completed last year and a new teaching block and sports complex will open soon. A-levels results were up last year at 79 per cent A*–B, and the cross-country and tennis teams are the ones to beat in Oxfordshire. Away from home, Tudor in Three Continents gives pupils the chance to visit schools in India, South Africa and Guatemala. Girls board in year groups and move to a different house each year. There is a happy, cosy atmosphere in the dorms, and we hear particularly good things about the Todd's housemistress, Beth Buckner-Rowley. One top head told us: 'I have always been greeted by girls who smile a lot and seem to thrive on education. I was sold immediately on that when contemplating it for my daughters.' What's more, the food is tops.

Wellington College

Crowthorne, Berkshire RG45 7PU ● ●
Website wellingtoncollege.org.uk
Head Julian Thomas, MBA, since September; previously head of Caterham School Pupils 1,045. Day: 129 boys, 80 girls; boarding: 506 boys, 330 girls Faith C of E Ages 13–18 Term fees Day: £10,010; boarding: £11,925
Oxbridge 16 places Registration Two years before entry; £200 fee Admission ISEB pre-test, CE or school's own exam, interview and previous school's report Alumni Sebastian Faulks, George Orwell

Sir Anthony Seldon is off to be vice-chancellor of Buckingham University, leaving big shoes for his successor to fill. New head Julian Thomas has arrived from Caterham School. Dr Seldon is a very vocal critic of league tables (among other things), so we hope he'll forgive us for starting with Wellington's superb academic results: 95 per cent A*–B at A-level last year, with an average IB score of 40 points and five pupils achieving 'the remarkable and perfect score of 45'. Wellington's sporting reputation has reached new heights too: the cricket 1st XI won the Cowdrey Cup; four of the girls' hockey teams won their respective independent schools leagues and the 1st rugby XV won the Daily Mail Trophy. The college won an Artsmark gold award from the Arts Council for the stellar quality of its art, music and drama – note, for example, the whole-college production of *Miss Saigon*; the Symphony Orchestra's performance at Cadogan Hall; and the Matisse silkscreens exhibition in the coffee shop. And the college's talented bunch of singer-songwriters who toured Memphis and Nashville, led by the head of jazz, rock and pop – as job titles go, that's a pretty cool one. Dr Seldon has been a passionate advocate of innovative teaching styles, a pioneer of wellbeing and mindfulness lessons, a campaigner for broadening access and a very entertaining ruffler of feathers. The schools world will be quieter and a whole lot less fun without him.

Whitgift School

Haling Park, South Croydon CR2 6YT ●
Website whitgift.co.uk
Head Dr Christopher Barnett, PhD, since 1991; previously second master at Dauntsey's School Pupils 1,448 boys: 1,350 day, 98 boarding Faith Inter-denom Ages 10–18 Term fees Day: £5,996; boarding: £11,552
Oxbridge 11 places Registration By November of year before entry; £90 fee

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Admission School's own exam, interview and previous school's report
Alumni Derren Brown, Danny Cipriani

Is there another school that can boast a High Court judge and a member of JLS among its alumni? Of course there isn't. Whitgift is, says our spy, 'a phenomenal school on so many levels'. Number-one phenomenon – just ahead of the flamingos, peacocks and wallabies that roam its grounds – has to be its head, the energetic and inspirational Dr Christopher Barnett, who has been at the helm since 1991. The French government last year awarded him the Chevalier des Palmes Académiques in recognition of his work as a champion of modern languages. Whitgift's sixth-formers choose between IB, A-levels and BTec. Last year's results were, says the school, 'exceptional': a quarter of the IB students notched up 40 points or more, and two achieved the top 45 points; please note also a choral scholarship to Christ Church, Oxford, and a full Harvard scholarship. Boys play 40 different sports (Whitgift's sport is even better than Millfield's, Dr Barnett claims) and the facilities are fabulous. Ditto music, and there's an ongoing tie-in with the Royal Philharmonic. The new boarding house is popular, with flexi-boarding encouraged – there are no plans to fill the house with an international crowd. Don't be put off by the Croydon address – it's only 20 minutes by train from Victoria, and, golly, it's beautiful when you get here, a million miles from the concrete jungle of your average London day school.

Winchester College

College Street, Winchester, Hampshire SO23 9NA ●
Website winchestercollege.org
Head Dr Ralph Townsend, PhD, since 2005; previously head of Oundle
Pupils 690 boys, all boarding Faith C of E Ages 13–18 Term fees £11,870
Oxbridge 43 places Registration By end of Year 5; £200 fee Admission School's own exam, interview and previous school's report Alumni Antony Beevor, Kenneth Clark

There is an enormous, beating, intellectual heart to Winchester College. The lifeblood of this heart? 'Conversation,' says eminent head Dr Ralph Townsend. The scholars set the pace for all the learned discussion – but so does the entrance criteria. Winchester ditched the CE yonks ago; in addition to their own tests, there's a significant interview – an hour-long talk between boy and housemaster – to discern cultural interests and intellectual aptitude. We know what you're thinking – nerd alert! But the boys we met were chatty and engaging, not monosyllabic boffins. Applicants must have other interests too. Unique to Winchester is Div, a daily lesson and cross-curricular 'cocktail' covering any topic. Unsurprisingly, the standard of music and drama is magnificent; the sport, perhaps surprisingly, is also top-drawer, even though it's not compulsory. And lest we forget, 35 per cent of boys won Oxbridge places last year and 10 per cent are off to the Ivy League. The house system is central and all pupils dine with staff. 'The houses are so different – it's worth doing your research,' says a father. 'And the housemaster definitely picks the boy.' An insider says: 'Winchester is not an institution; it's a learning environment. It has a very "now" feel but in a breathtaking, historical setting.' All credit to Dr Townsend, who retires next summer; Dr Timothy Hands will arrive from Magdalen College School to take his place.

Woldingham School

Marden Park, Woldingham, Surrey CR3 7YA ●
Website woldinghamschool.co.uk
Head Jayne Triffitt, MA, since 2007; previously head of St Mary's School, Cambridge Pupils 543 girls: 224 day, 319 boarding Faith RC Ages 11–18 Term fees Day: £6,915 boarding: £11,045
Oxbridge 5 places Registration By September of year before entry; £100 fee Admission School's own exam, interview and previous school's report
Alumnae Clarissa Dickson Wright, Carey Mulligan

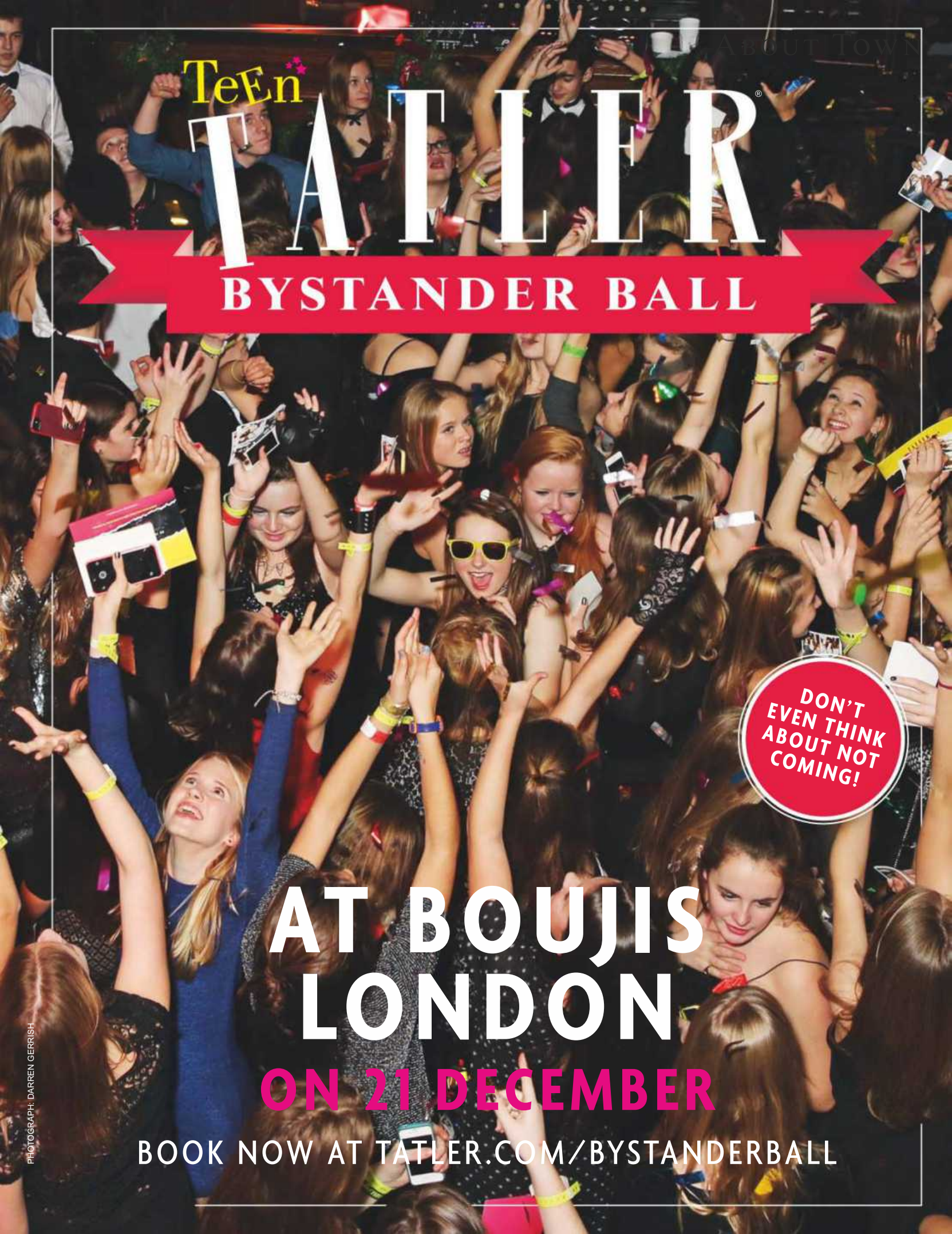
The mood at Woldingham is very buoyant at the moment: numbers are up (particularly in the sixth form), academic results are up (87.6 per cent A*–B at A-level), Oxbridge offers are up (five places) and, the best bit, they've added ballroom dancing to the activities roster. 'It's a lovely school, in great shape,' says an insider. Founded as a Sacred Heart School, this all-girls day and boarding outfit can call 700 acres of woodland home – but did you know it's only half an hour from London by train? And that they have their own station in the grounds? The savviest SW London families have quickly cottoned on to everything on offer. A member of staff describes girls as 'very interested and resilient', and achievements are diverse: one girl was one of the top 15 Foyle Young Poets of the Year; a duo won the Surrey Girls Golfing Championships; and one pianist achieved a distinction in her ATCL diploma. We love the sound of Woldingham Question Time, with a staff panel but chaired by a sixth-former. Just over half of girls board, and about 50 per cent go home at weekends. Some of the boarding areas have been smartened up; head Jayne Triffitt has her eye on the science blocks next.


Woldingham School

Wycombe Abbey

High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP11 1PE ●
Website wycombeabbey.com
Head Rhiannon Wilkinson, MEd, since 2013; previously head of Harrogate Ladies' College Pupils 554 girls: 33 day, 521 boarding Faith C of E Ages 11–18
Term fees Day: £8,925; boarding: £11,900 Oxbridge 29 places
Registration Two years before entry; £200 fee Admission CE or school's own exam and interview Alumnae Baroness Butler-Sloss, India Knight

'What really impresses me is the combination of diligence and fun,' says a father of two Wycombe girls. 'It seems natural that whatever you do, work or play, you do it full tilt.' Wycombe's academic results are as impressive as ever. It came top of *The Sunday Times* independent secondary school league table in 2014 (90 per cent A*–A grades at A-level), and was rated outstanding in every category by the ISI inspectors. A third of last year's leavers went to Oxbridge. Forty girls headed to MIT to take part in science-and-technology workshops (Wycombe is the first British school to be invited by the prestigious university), and others beat 74,000 competitors to win Coca-Cola's Real Business Challenge. The full-tilt approach carries through into the extracurricular arena (county and national sports stars, diploma-level musicians, ballet to an exceptionally high standard). The 1st lacrosse team won the National Schools' Championships. There are four applicants for every place – they're looking for 'bright, motivated girls with high academic potential'. And you have to be up for the boarding – new houses are next on the building programme. In the meantime, we hear there's a certain amount of 'poshifying' going on – 'lots of twee little lampposts,' grumbles a Wycombe insider.


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David Walker, Housemaster Wellington College

BYE BYE PAPER

Microsoft is revolutionising how classrooms work.
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The digital age has brought great changes to the education system and the way our children learn. It is something to be embraced. Microsoft is trailblazing ahead with a range of snazzy devices (like the Surface Pro 3) and thousands of educational apps to make learning easier and more fun. Schools like Wellington College have already introduced Surface Pro 3 across the board and pupils are reaping the benefits. The Surface Pro 3 is the very latest in communications technology. Is it a laptop? A tablet? This clever clogs combines the expertise of both. It is fully portable with all the lightheartedness and touchscreen fun of a tablet and the nitty-gritty work ethic of a laptop (fully upgradable to Windows 10).The 'dog ate my homework' excuse is a thing of the past, with OneDrive everything is in one place and securely backed up to the Cloud. Pupils can upload work directly, allowing teachers to provide feedback in a much shorter time frame. Not to mention feedback can be more detailed with the possibility of audio marking. Project work is a doddle with the advanced collating and note-taking functions within OneNote. This allows for greater communication between students, even when they're not in the same room. One, two, Surface Pro 3... easy as A, B, C...



A

APPS FOR EDUCATION

The use of Skype allows children to engage with other pupils in far away places and even guest speakers. Imagine chatting to a Yellowstone National Park ranger as they bring grizzly bears and mountain trails to life! Possibilities for interactive learning are endless. Meanwhile, clever programmes like Sway and OneNote facilitate group learning and sharing of material. With Sway, any project or presentation can instantly become interactive. Online searches are suggested to help you find relevant images, videos, tweets and other content to drag and drop straight in. OneNote collates notes and ideas enabling multiple people to work on a page at any given time. From apps exploring physics and maths to ones dedicated to reading comprehension, learning has never felt so immediate and so exciting. Instant feedback is available for tests and problems completed online and help is available at every step. Access classic books (over 23,000) from Free Books. Edit photos or explore online design with a range of art programmes. It gives pupils learning at their fingertips.

B

BYE BYE PEN AND PAPER

The days of dog-eared copybooks and ink-stained homework are coming to an end thanks to Surface Pro 3. Why should children lug heavy books to and from school when they can access everything in one device? Testimonials from schools like Wellington College show how easily the Surface Pro 3 can be integrated into everyday learning. In every class. For every subject. The capacity for digital inking means notes can be written by hand on screen. Hand movements using a special-purpose pen are captured and recorded on the screen, making note taking, diagrams and sketches a cinch. Even better, using a pen avoids that distracting, irritating clackity-clack-clack that comes from typing. Perfect for classroom calm. Furthermore, with Microsoft's new browser, Edge, it is even possible to mark up web pages and share them back with teachers and study groups. Programmes like OneNote and OneDrive allow for ease of collaboration between parents and teachers. Easy peasy!



C

CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENT

Perhaps the biggest concern about introducing snazzy tech to children is security. Can their access to the big bad online world be limited? Can their data be kept safe? With Surface Pro 3 the answer is a resounding 'yes'. Microsoft SmartScreen helps protect you while you're using Microsoft Edge from phishing sites that may attempt to steal your identity and personal information. It performs reputation checks for each site you visit and will block the malicious ones. Plus the Windows Defender is fully robust with software ready to tackle harmful viruses. Surface Pro 3 has also thought of protecting children from their own curiosity with family features designed to block adult content and apps. What's more, activity reports are available so you can see just what your child is up to. Breathe easy.

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SOUTH-WEST & WALES

Badminton

Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol BS9 3BA

Website badmintonschool.co.uk
Head Rebecca Tear, MA, since 2012; previously deputy head of Wycombe Abbey Pupils 311 girls: 131 day, 180 boarding Faith Non-denom Ages 11–18 Term fees Day: £5,960; boarding: £10,510 Oxbridge 3 places Registration By November of year before entry; £100 fee Admission School's own exam, interview and previous school's report Alumnae Indira Gandhi, Dame Iris Murdoch
Prep: Head Emma Davies Pupils 139 girls: 131 day, 8 boarding Ages 3–11 Term fees Day: £3,810; boarding: £7,100

Approachable and glamorous head Rebecca Tear ('a real powerhouse,' says a mother) wants Badminton to 'keep on producing great individuals – confident, curious and keen to learn'. Life skills are key too, and now sixth-formers can add another string to their bow: the Leiths Diploma in Food and Wine – very useful for D of E and ski seasons. The girls are already a brainy bunch, scoring 85 per cent A*–B at A-level last year; the school has introduced the EPQ, plus a new Saturday-morning tutorial in response to increased applications to US universities. Badminton has three head girls but no prefects, and peer-mentoring is serious: older pupils who provide a listening ear to fellow students receive training from a psychologist. Being 20 minutes from Bristol, girls can enjoy the safety of their community yet have access to some bright lights: pupils attend lectures at the university and there's an annual concert at St George's hall. Art and music are very strong – one pupil received several offers to attend conservatoires last year. The school's sport is improving, particularly in netball, and they're building new facilities to match. Girls are pleasantly unselfconscious and 'really get behind each other', says Mrs Tear. And everyone loves the fajitas and nachos at lunch.

Blundell's School

Tiverton, Devon EX16 4DN

Website blundells.org
Head Nicola Huggett, MA, since 2013; previously deputy head of Downe House Pupils 590. Day: 125 boys, 95 girls; boarding: 223 boys, 147 girls Faith C of E Ages 11–18 Term fees Day: £6,795; boarding: £10,585 Oxbridge 4 places Registration One year before entry; £100 fee Admission CE or school's own exam and interview Alumni RD Blackmore, the Rev Jack Russell, John Wyndham
Prep: Head Andy Southgate Pupils 228 day: 121 boys, 107 girls Ages 3–11 Term fees £3,700

Maybe there's something in the Devon air because Blundell's is blooming. This unstuffy school is a 'Come on' rather than a 'Go on' sort of place – it's full of talented, encouraging staff and happy pupils. Sport gets top billing, especially hockey and rugby; equestrian, skiing and canoeing teams have all reached national-championship level; and co-ed fives and girls' cricket are taking off. House spirit runs deep, particularly during the 135-year-old annual Russell cross-country run. Boarders change house with age group, but all belong to inter-year 'families'. The sixth-form house is co-ed and offers university-halls-style independence. There are stacks of trips: a cricket tour to Barbados; the choir to Barcelona; science visits to Boston and New York. Drama productions are wonderfully eclectic, think *Lorna Doone* (novelist RD Blackmore was an Old Blundellian), *The Snow Queen* and Noël Coward's *Cavalcade*. We always hear great things about head Nicola Huggett, who is giving the academic side of things a kick: A-levels leapt up to 73 per cent A*–B last year; the Oxbridge programme reaped four places; and law and medicine prep courses have been introduced. The Learner's Toolkit for Years 7 and 8 aims to help pupils become better learners – with a bucketload of Blundell's spirit thrown in.

Bryanston

Blandford, Dorset DT11 0PX

Website bryanston.co.uk
Head Sarah Thomas, BA, since 2005; previously deputy head of Uppingham Pupils 671. Day: 50 boys, 32 girls; boarding: 332 boys, 257 girls Faith C of E Ages 13–18 Term fees Day: £9,405; boarding: £11,469 Oxbridge 7 places Registration No deadline but early registration advised; £200 fee Admission CE or school's own exam and interview Alumni Sir Terence Conran, Ben Fogle

Bryanston may sit in splendid isolation (read: the middle of nowhere) in Dorset, but the school has always been an educational innovator – it went co-ed back in the Seventies. Today, parents have a dedicated app to receive weekly updates and they can download reports from their children's tutors. Individuality is positively encouraged – you could say the education is very 'bespoke': there's one-on-one time with subject teachers, and each pupil is assigned a tutor, who monitors academic and extracurricular progress plus pastoral care. The result, as an observer says, is that Bryanston 'has become many things to many people'. So there is academic welly: one pupil scored the maximum 45 points in IB last year (newly introduced); A-levels hit 73.7 per cent A*–B; and 100 per cent of all Greek, Latin and German papers were graded A*–A. There are plenty of sports stars, like the try-scoring England U18 rugby players, or the U14 girls' county hockey champions. School plays – *Fiddler on the Roof* was last year's highlight – have been compared to West End productions for their professionalism and skill. All credit to head Sarah Thomas, who has her finger on the pulse. The boarding community is big and day pupils often get beds, but the school empties at weekends. Famously, there is


Blundell's School



ILLUSTRATIONS: BOB WILSON/PHOSPHOR ART. BACKGROUND: SHUTTERSTOCK

no uniform, just guidelines, which are very elastic. Mrs Thomas says of her pupils: 'They are all known individually.' Quite right too.

Canford

Wimborne, Dorset BH21 3AD ● ●
Website canford.com
Head Ben Vessey, MBA, since 2013; previously senior deputy head of Christ's Hospital **Pupils** 637. Day: 135 boys, 72 girls; boarding: 244 boys, 183 girls **Faith** C of E **Ages** 13–18 **Term fees** Day: £8,336; boarding: £10,872 **Oxbridge** 11 places **Registration** No deadline but early registration advised; £100 fee **Admission** Pre-test and interview at 11, CE or school's own exam **Alumni** Sir Henry Cecil, General Sir Brian Kenny, Alan Hollinghurst

This top co-ed boarding outfit is soaring in popularity. Head Ben Vessey has been scrutinising Canford since he started two years ago, and the result is his strategic review (he does have an MBA after all). In a nutshell, its aim is to carry on doing what the school does best: that is, turn out grounded students who achieve terrific feats. Pupils scored 83 per cent A*–B at A-level last year, and won 11 Oxbridge offers (including a choral scholarship to Magdalen College). Add to that two Army scholarships (the school's CCF won the Pringle Trophy, the prestigious interschools cadet competition) and graduate contracts to top accountancy and consultancy firms. Mr Vessey wants his pupils to work within a global context, so great emphasis is placed on the school's tie-ins with orphanages in Tanzania, India and Argentina. Closer to home, pupils help talented local youngsters through the SHINE project. Sport here is top class: county hockey champions, unbeaten rugby squads, a super-speedy 1st VIII on the river and even a Honda RYA Youth RIB powerboating champion. Want in? There is a pre-test in Year 7 and the school says applicants' attitude is critical. What's more, Canford is a beautiful place to be: a gothic Charles Barry castle surrounded by weeping willows, waterways and trimmed lawns. Parents are beating a path to its very picturesque door.


Canford

Cheltenham College

Bath Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL53 7LD ● ●
Website cheltenhamcollege.org
Head Dr Alex Peterken, EdD, since 2010; previously deputy head **Pupils** 661. Day: 67 boys, 57 girls; boarding: 332 boys, 205 girls **Faith** C of E **Ages** 13–18 **Term fees** Day: £8,755; boarding: £11,570 **Oxbridge** 4 places **Registration** Three years before entry advised; £100 fee **Admission** CE or school's own exam, interview and previous school's report **Alumni** Jack Davenport, polar explorer Dr Edward Wilson
Prep: **Head** Jonathan Whybrow **Pupils** 401 day and boarding; 224 boys, 177 girls **Ages** 3–13 **Term fees** Day: £5,605; boarding: £7,285

When Dr Alex Peterken became head of Cheltenham College in 2010, the school was fed by nine prep schools; today it's 29. And over the same period he has installed 60 new staff, the roll has increased by 20 per cent (many more girls) and results are on the up (77 per cent A*–B last year). A prep head tells us: 'He's really going places.' The food is also much improved – a member of staff admitted putting on half a stone in two months. If you were choosing a Cheltenham school by looks alone, CC would win hands down. In addition to the listed Victoriana, there's a state-of-the-art science block and a new girls' boarding house, Westal. (FYI, the boys' house Boyne has a huge games room.) Future plans include an extension to the sports hall, a new medical centre and sixth-form 'cottages' – to give pupils a taste of independent living. Cricket is huge (if you score a home century or take seven wickets, a tree is planted in your honour), but the Talented Athlete Programme nurtures success across the board. Pupils have won national caps for rugby, rowing, hockey and badminton. Everyone here uses MacBooks and we approve of the new wellbeing initiative, which helps this close community deal with the stresses of teenage life.

The Cheltenham Ladies' College

Bayshill Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL50 3EP ●
Website cheltladiescollege.org
Head Eve Jardine-Young, MA, since 2011; previously director of studies at Blundell's School **Pupils** 873 girls: 193 day, 680 boarding **Faith** C of E **Ages** 11–18 **Term fees** Day: £7,405; boarding: £11,030 **Oxbridge** 24 places **Registration** Up to one year before entry; £150 fee **Admission** School's own exam and interview **Alumnae** Bridget Riley, Kristin Scott Thomas, Amanda Wakeley



We're always impressed by the CLC girls who come to our Schools Guide Awards. They're confident, intelligent and articulate, as you'd expect, but also down to earth and likeable – 'a great blend of modern and just old-fashioned enough,' says a mother. We're impressed by head Eve Jardine-Young too. 'She's a real force for good. She empowers her girls,' we're told. CLC is fast-paced, purposeful and produces stellar results (91.5 per cent A*–B at A-level; two of last year's leavers scored the maximum 45 points in the IB). The quality of pupils' achievements and learning was rated 'exceptional' by the ISI. Academic excellence is top priority, but they take music and drama seriously too. The newly refurbished theatre and arts centre is used by the town for its jazz, literature and science festivals. Sport might not get the billing that it has at other girls' schools, but there were international call-ups for rowing, skiing and hockey, and the Gold D of E girls went on a 24-day trip to Mongolia. The boarding houses are getting a serious facelift, and they've built a new junior house. There's a large overseas contingent; parents fly in from all corners of

DID YOU KNOW?

Psst! Dean Close has just bought St-John's-on-the-Hill prep school in Chepstow, saving it from closure

the globe for open days. 'The efforts people go to get their kids in are phenomenal,' says an observer.

Clayesmore

Iwerne Minster, Blandford, Dorset DT11 8LL

Website clayesmore.com
Head Martin Cooke, BEd, since 2000; previously head of Clayesmore Prep School Pupils 480. Day: 153 boys, 77 girls; boarding: 145 boys, 105 girls Faith C of E Ages 13–18 Term fees Day: £8,060; boarding: £10,990 Oxbridge Occasional Registration No deadline, early registration advised; £100 fee Admission CE or school's own exam; interview and previous school's report Alumni Edward Ardizzone, Tony Hart
Prep: Head William Dunlop Pupils 226 day and boarding; 135 boys, 91 girls Ages 3–13 Term fees Day: £5,770; boarding: £7,770

New to our Guide, Clayesmore piqued our interest a few years ago and – whoosh! – all of a sudden it's taken off. 'It blew me away,' says a mother, who rather regretted sending her daughter to a better-known rival. Clayesmore had a reputation as being the sort of place that scooped up those who struggled elsewhere; now talented pupils are soaring. (It still lovingly does the scooping up, and the SEN department is fabulous.) The key is breathing space – head Martin Cooke has instilled a caring ethos that allows pupils time to get help with anything, be that work, sport, music or relationships. Home is a postcard-perfect Dorset village and the campus is stacked with facilities. Of particular note are the art and DT departments. In sport, the U15 girls' hockey team slayed some big local adversaries recently; the cross-country runners are Dorset champions. There is an impressive careers programme, including an 'employability day' and a youth enterprise challenge (like *The Apprentice* but no one gets fired). We love the sound of the Picnic in the Park jazz evening and their version of Glyndebourne called Hampers & Champers. The boys' house Devine has a beautiful garden, an Aga and a ghost.

Clifton College

Guthrie Road, Clifton, Bristol BS8 3EZ

Website cliftoncollege.com
Head Mark Moore, MA, since 2005; previously head of English at Radley College Pupils 692. Day: 237 boys, 154 girls, boarding: 184 boys, 117 girls Faith C of E Ages 13–18 Term fees Day: £7,800; boarding: £11,455 Oxbridge 6 places Registration One year before entry advised; £150 fee Admission CE or school's own exam Alumni John Cleese, Trevor Howard, Sir Michael Redgrave
Prep: Head John Milne Pupils 517 day and boarding: 307 boys, 210 girls Ages 3–13 Term fees Day: £5,585; boarding: £8,900

We often remark on Clifton College's grown-up feel. It's situated in the heart of residential Bristol, and more than 20 per cent of pupils are from overseas – mostly European plus a sizeable Russian contingent. There are 47 nationalities in total, alongside the 300 or so Bristol-based day pupils. There's a saying 'strength in breadth' – and Clifton's curriculum offers plenty of that: more than 30 GCSE and 36 A-level subjects are available. Half of A-levels were awarded an A or A* last year, and there was a record number of Oxbridge offers for 2015 – as impressive are the offers pupils received from the Royal Academy of Music, Royal College of Music, the Guildhall, the Vienna Conservatory, LAMDA, RADA and the Bristol Old Vic. (It's safe to say the music and drama departments are singing.) The sports facilities are amazing – think an Olympic-standard hockey Astro and a 3G pitch for football and rugby that's so good it's used by the England U20 rugby team. Clifton are also national champions in rackets, real tennis and hockey. Head Mark Moore encourages a liberal, diverse environment, so there aren't too many rules. When sixth-formers visit town, we hear they gravitate towards both Harvey Nicks and Primark in equal measure.


Clifton College



Dauntsey's School

West Lavington, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 4HE

Website dauntseys.org
Head Mark Lascelles, BA, since 2012; previously acting head at the King's School, Canterbury Pupils 800. Day: 267 boys, 235 girls; boarding: 154 boys, 148 girls Faith C of E Ages 11–18 Term fees Day: £5,780; boarding: £9,660 Oxbridge 7 places Registration By November two years before entry; £100 fee Admission School's own exam and interview Alumni Thomas the Tank Engine creator the Rev Wilbert Awdry, newsreader Andrew Gardner

One savvy insider describes Dauntsey's as 'a very unpretentious country school that confidently stands among the grander options'. Another tells us it's very much a hidden gem – low-key locals and landed types leave the fashionable alternatives nearby to the Londoners. Dauntsey's is a Guide newcomer, and it's come on leaps and bounds from its agricultural roots; we are mightily impressed. They scored a very competitive 80 per cent A*–B at A-level last year, with seven Oxbridge offers. Highbrow malarkey, like the performance of William Golding's *Lord of Flies* by an all-boys dance troupe, occurs alongside the first-ever amateur production of *Mamma Mia!*. The 1st XV rugby team reached the quarter-finals of the NatWest Cup, and the cheerleading team, the Dauntsey's Dynamites, won the schools' division in the southern regionals. They appointed a head of 'adventure education' last year, who introduced climbing, canoeing, rifle shooting and outdoor cooking to help build life skills and resilience. For almost 45 years, pupils have taken to the high seas in the *Jolie Brise*, the school's 56ft gaff cutter (built in Le Havre in 1913); she won the Cowes Small Ships Race in 2014. Head Mark Lascelles says the school asks pupils to do three things: give their best, look after one another and have a spirit of adventure. Mr Lascelles was lower master at King's Canterbury, so he knows what he's doing. Watch this space – Dauntsey's might just become one of those fashionable places itself.

Dean Close School

Shelburne Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL51 6HE

Website deanclose.org.uk
Head Jonathan Lancashire, MA, since 2008; previously bursar Pupils 481. Day: 108 boys, 88 girls; boarding: 153 boys, 132 girls Faith C of E Ages 13–18 Term fees Day: £7,577; boarding: £10,980 Oxbridge 4 places Registration 18 months before entry; £100 fee Admission CE or school's own exam and interview Alumni Government adviser Lord Ribeiro, actor Will Merrick, scriptwriter John Foster
Prep: Head Roger Jones Pupils 422 day and boarding; 252 boys 170 girls Age 3–13 Term fees Day: £5,284; boarding: £7,770

In the highly pressured world of education, it's always refreshing to hear Dean Close's take on schooling: they want pupils to try new things but don't need them to excel furiously at all of them (that reverse psychology reaps its own rewards). This unsnobby Cheltenham school is known for its community spirit and, of late, numbers have risen, scholarship applications are up and the reach has broadened beyond the core of forces families, locals and the odd London exile. Almost half of A-level grades were A*–A last year. More board than do not, and the ever-popular prep school has been transformed now its brand new building is open. Music and drama flourish here: lots of Edinburgh Fringe productions, and for *Singin' in the Rain* they hired a West End set and used 'real' rain. The lower school's *Canterbury Tales* was a hit too – despite the cast struggling with a tummy bug. The choir, who have made their own CD, performed in New York; there's also a new organ and a string quartet to help pupils get tuned in. A new swimming pool is planned; Dean Close are good at rugby; and girls' cricket has come on a lot. The food? 'Delicious – decadent cakes and puddings,' says an insider.

Downside School

Stratton-on-the-Fosse, Radstock, Bath BA3 4RJ

Website downside.co.uk
Head Dr James Whitehead, PhD, since 2014; previously second master at Worth School Pupils 351. Day: 42 boys, 27 girls; boarding: 186 boys, 96 girls Faith RC Ages 11–18 Term fees Day: £5,732; boarding: £10,229 Oxbridge 6 places Registration By November of year before entry advised; £100 fee Admission CE or school's own exam, previous school's report and interview Alumni Auberon Waugh, historian Count Adam Zamoyski

Founded by the Benedictine order in 1606, Downside is celebrating 200 years on its current site amid rolling Somerset hills. The vast abbey presides impressively over the school and although Downside has had a lay head – Dr James Whitehead – for more than a year, the Catholic ethos is as strong as ever: 85 per cent of pupils are Catholic and come from all over the UK, nay the world; last summer, three girls worked with Benedictine nuns providing relief in the Philippines. It is a full-boarding school, which only helps to galvanise what Dr Whitehead calls 'a real, tangible community spirit' and 'high standards of integrity and service'. He has been gently raising results in the classroom: 73 per cent A*–B at A-level, and six pupils won Oxbridge places last year, including an organ scholarship to Keble College, Oxford. Not bad, given the school is not highly selective. The new director of sport is looking to build on the girls' 1st hockey team's unbeaten season (although he's a rugby man at heart, we hear). There's a new art department, with photography and graphic-design facilities. There's a fab café too, which dispenses frothy coffee with gusto. It's the little traditions that make Downside so lovely: the bacon rolls at break; soup after games; the school's Ball Game; the Vintners' Society; and that even cricket matches stop for the Angelus at 6pm.

Godolphin

Milford Hill, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP1 2RA

Website godolphin.org
Head Emma Hattersley, BA, since 2014; previously pastoral deputy head at Sherborne Girls Pupils 337 girls: 170 day, 167 boarders Faith C of E Ages 11–18 Term fees Day: £6,346; boarding: £9,616 Oxbridge Occasional Registration 18 months before entry; £100 fee Admission CE or school's own exam Alumnae Jilly Cooper, Deborah Meaden, Minette Walters
Prep: Head Julia Miller Pupils 80 girls day and boarding Ages 3–11 Term fees Day: £4,107; boarding: £7,433

Head Emma Hattersley has been at Godolphin for 18 months now, and her sensible, down-to-earth approach perfectly reflects the school and girls under her care. The new Elizabeth Godolphin Award, named after the founder, has been introduced to furnish girls with professional and practical skills for life: digital literacy, public speaking, how to understand the property market; and how to host a black-tie dinner. Life skills, indeed. Godolphin is a small place with a traditional backbone (they still wear pinnies), and about half the girls board in one of the four houses. A spy says Godolphin 'doesn't pretend to be anything it isn't, and surprises along the way', whether it's reaching the finals of the Barnardo's and BBC's choir of the year competitions, training an unbeaten swimming team or winning the regional lacrosse championships. These clever girls also scored a tremendous 86 per cent A*–B at A-level last year. It's a very nurturing environment. 'Unkind behaviour simply isn't tolerated,' says a mother, and an insider says that girls are 'hard-working and delightfully make-up free'. Tidy too – the dorms we saw were spotless. The school has introduced a new 11+ exam and newbies join the small cohort who come straight up from the prep ('new head, invigorated curriculum,' says the school). It's looking for girls with spark – but all pupils have one thing in common: a penchant for the legendary chocolate tiffin bar.

DID YOU KNOW?

Marlborough College has a neolithic mound in the heart of its grounds – and Merlin is supposedly buried there

Marlborough College

Bath Road, Marlborough, Wiltshire SN8 1PA

Website marlboroughcollege.org
Head Jonathan Leigh, MA, since 2012; previously head of Ridley College, Canada Pupils 928. Day: 10 boys, 13 girls; boarding: 540 boys, 365 girls


Godolphin

BOYS GIRLS MIXED

Faith C of E Ages 13–18 Term fees £11,310 Oxbridge 22 places Registration Two years before entry; £250 fee Admission School's own exam, interview and previous school's report Alumni The Duchess of Cambridge, Sir John Betjeman

Marlborough won our Best Public School award last year, a reflection of the number of parents bending our ear about how to get their offspring in. The answer to that? 'You can't be coached for Marlborough,' says senior admissions tutor Dr Niall Hamilton. 'It all depends upon consistent hard work and play, and generosity of spirit.' They give most weight (50 per cent) to your previous school's reference, followed by performance in two interviews (40 per cent). There's also a bespoke test, but they're less fussed about how you do in this (and no, you can't prepare for it). There's been a 'relentless rise' in academic results: 83 per cent A*–B at A-level; two-thirds of pre-U results earned distinctions; and the average IB score was 36 (which equates to two A*s and two As at A-level). They've completely revamped the sixth-form curriculum to keep pace with A-level changes, and, we're told, 'science is really being put on the map' with a massive redevelopment of the labs. Pupils were selected for international competitions in hockey, polo, rugby (the sevens won the Rosslyn Park Festival Plate), sailing and shooting. Music scholars performed a gala concert at Kensington Palace – history doesn't relate whether Marlborough's best-known alumna (and KP resident) was in the audience. On a sober note: only one other school (Eton) has a longer list of World War One casualties than Marlborough's – and pupils produced an hour-long documentary to commemorate the 749 fallen members of the college.

Millfield

Street, Somerset BA16 0YD

Website millfieldschool.com
Head Craig Considine, MEd, since 2008; previously head of Wanganui Collegiate School, New Zealand Pupils 1,237. Day: 166 boys, 147 girls; boarding: 580 boys, 344 girls Faith Non-denom Ages 13–18 Term fees Day: £7,760; boarding: £11,550 Oxbridge Occasional Registration At least two years before entry advised; £150 fee Admission CE or school's own exam, interview and previous school's report Alumni Olympians Helen Glover and Mark Foster
Prep: Head Shirley Shayler Pupils 458 day and boarding: 247 boys, 211 girls Age 2–13 Term fees Day: £5,850; boarding: £8,600

Despite its imperious sporting reputation, Millfield is a remarkably grounded and friendly place. Founded in 1935, it is free from the weight of tradition and, frankly, who needs it when you are the biggest co-ed boarding school in the country, with a vast campus packed with world-class facilities. The equestrian centre houses 60 horses; the fine-art centre is also home to the commercially run Atkinson Gallery; there's a 'product-design' block; and the dining room feels like you are in a John Lewis food hall. With the school's elite coaching programme, the opportunities for athletes are unparalleled – we can barely count the Olympians (six on the staff alone), or the international caps and national titles. Academic ability is mixed and exam results reflect this (49 per cent A*–B), but take note of the pupils heading to Harvard and Columbia. Head Craig Considine ensures class sizes are small, between eight and 14 pupils, to make sure no one is lost in the fray. He has also introduced the Nine at Millfield programme for first years, which combines academic rigour with outdoor learning. And to prove sport isn't everything, pupils won places in the National Youth Theatre and National Youth Orchestra last year. There's an enormous range of activities outside the classroom – everything from ultimate frisbee and falconry to Yoga 4 Boys and animal rescue – thankfully, not all at the same time.





Monkton Combe

Church Lane, Monkton Combe, Bath BA2 7HG

Website monktoncombeschool.com
Head Richard Backhouse, MA, since 2005; previously a teacher at Bradfield. From January 2016, Christopher Wheeler, BA, previously principal of Hillcrest International School, Nairobi Pupils 377. Day: 125 boys, 55 girls; boarding: 121 boys, 76 girls Faith C of E Ages 13–18 Term Fees Day: £6,501; boarding: £10,371 Oxbridge 4 places Registration Early registration advised; £100 fee Admission ISEB pre-test, interview Alumni Rower Steve Williams, author Bernard Cornwell
Prep: Head Andrew Marshall-Taylor Pupils 348 day and boarding; 201 boys, 147 girls Age 2–13 Term fees Day: £5,328; boarding: £7,680

We hear the day pupils at Monkton Combe love it so much they act like boarders and little wonder – this school is a lovely place to be. It is known for its central but unpushy Christian ethos, and head Richard Backhouse describes the school as a 'gentle place', where 'every child leaves more confident than when they arrive.' Mr Backhouse is off in January, when new head Christopher Wheeler arrives from the Hillcrest International School in Kenya. Monkton's prep is one of Bath's top picks and 75 per cent of pupils move on to the senior school; half board in houses that have a nice family feel. Last year, results took a leap up to 78 per cent A*–B, and art and design is really taking off: four leavers won places at Central Saint Martins, another pupil a place on the highly competitive Bristol Old Vic theatre-design course. On the sports front, the 1st boys' tennis team have lost only one match in four years and rowing is serious, with an indoor training centre, new boathouse and Olympic medal-winning coach. We like that there is a place for the quirky soul at Monkton: like the Bath FC fan who writes match reports for the local paper, or the England Hockey Young Umpire of the Year – who, when he was only 14, red-carded a 1st XI player and didn't even flinch.

Monmouth School

Almshouse Street, Monmouth NP25 3XP ●

Website monmouthschool.org Head Dr Andrew Daniel, PhD, since September; previously deputy head of Wellington School, Somerset Pupils 556 boys: 392 day, 164 boarding Faith C of E Ages 11–18 Term fees Day: £4,824; boarding: £8,741 Oxbridge 10 places Registration Early registration advised; £60 fee Admission CE or school's own exam, interview and previous school's report Alumni Rugby players Eddie Butler and Keith Jarrett **Prep**: Head Elaine Thomas Pupils 132 boys, day and boarding Ages 7–11 Fees Day: £3,383; boarding: £6,333

Dr Andrew Daniel, formerly deputy head at Wellington School in Somerset, has just taken over this mighty Welsh dragon. Located close to the Brecon Beacons, it knows what makes boys tick. The girls at Habs Monmouth are next door, close enough for drama and debating, but far enough to leave this lot to their own devices. And what feats they achieve on their own: Monmouth has one of the best rugby teams in the country and reached the last four of the *Daily Mail* Schools Trophy. The rowing is just as robust: the coxed four are national schools champions. Music is another great strength, and a boy won an organ scholarship to Cambridge, one of 10 pupils who scored Oxbridge offers. About 30 per cent board but the number is rising. We like the fact that the new sixth-form house gives boys more independence as a stepping stone to university. Meanwhile, the little 'uns (including boys from the age of nine, who are at Monmouth's prep, the Grange) hunker down in Chapel House. The big news is that stage one of the Heart Project, a major expansion of the school's facilities, is complete, so they now have a space-age teaching block with one of the most sophisticated air-conditioning systems we've ever heard of – oxygen for the brain, you see.

St Mary's Calne

Calne, Wiltshire SN11 0DF ●

Website stmaryscalne.org Head Dr Felicia Kirk, PhD, since 2013; previously head of sixth form at Ipswich High School for Girls Pupils 350 girls: 66 day, 284 boarding Faith C of E Ages 11–18 Term Fees Day: £8,800; boarding: £11,750 Oxbridge 5 places Registration Three to five years before entry; £200 fee Admission CE or school's own exam and assessment day Alumnae Dressage rider Laura Tomlinson, Eva Rice

You know about St Mary's Calne's domination of the lacrosse pitches, of course, and their brilliance at drama. We'll get to those soon. But let's first direct your attention to their academic results: 91 per cent A*–B and 61 per cent A*–A grades last year, and 100 per cent A* for the Extended Project Qualification. No wonder they were ranked best independent in the South-West by *The Sunday Times*. The highlight of our researcher's tour was a chat with three sixth-formers: 'They were full of life, enthusiasm, charm and spirit, and clearly highly intelligent.' In the past, we've had a mild dig at St Mary's unexciting architecture, but they've launched a 10-year development plan that will include a new art school and science and performing arts centres. There's a new lower-sixth boarding house: boarding here is organised by year group, which means that everyone shares the highs and lows. Drama is tremendous, and includes Speak Out!, RADA's communication-skills course. There's plenty of community involvement, with a mentoring programme at a local academy. And sport: stellar lacrosse results – former St Mary's pupils captained the Welsh and English lacrosse teams and became county champs in five age groups last year. They also win medals for skiing, equestrianism and synchronised swimming. Register your girl when she's eight or nine.

St Mary's Shaftesbury

Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 9LP ●

Website st-marys-shaftesbury.co.uk Head Richard James, BMus, since 2007; previously deputy head at St Mary's Ascot Pupils 280 girls: 97 day, 183 boarding Faith RC Ages 11–18 Term fees Day: £6,445; boarding: £9,350 Oxbridge 2 places Registration Two years before entry; £100 fee Admission School's own exam Alumnae Anna Chancellor, Martha Fiennes

One of the best things about an all-girls boarding school is the freedom gals have to just be gals, and St Mary's affords just that. It's a small place at the bottom of a drive lined with trees and sheep and, says our spy, girls 'couldn't have been jollier, more unselfconscious company'. It's Catholic (although about half of pupils are of different faiths) and full-boarding; a mother praises the excellent pastoral care and says, 'Kindness and respect are the norm.' Head Richard James is thoughtful, calm and very musical; he has been known to accompany pupils on the piano in music and drama recitals. In the classroom, leavers hit a respectable 73 per cent A*–B at A-level last year. There's a new director of studies, and a new Med Society to advise budding doctors. Everyone loves the just-opened art centre, with its photography and textile rooms. The sports facilities aren't quite as shiny, but girls still hold their own and have been selected for county hockey and netball squads. St Mary's leads the way in all things eco: their biomass boiler is the largest of its kind in the UK and has cut bills by a whopping 70 per cent – they've got solar panels too. Girls love the sixth-form entertainment, the fancy dress and their swishy kilts – 'de rigueur,' says Mr James.

Sherborne Girls

Bradford Road, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 3QN ●

Website sherborne.com Head Jenny Dwyer, BEd, since 2006; previously head of Prior's Field Pupils 445 girls: 418 boarding, 27 day Faith C of E Ages 11–18 Term fees Day: £7,770; boarding: £10,695 Oxbridge 3 places Registration One year before entry: £100 fee Admission CE or school's own exam and previous school's report Alumnae Maria Aitken, Sophie Kinsella

Head Jenny Dwyer is just the sort of role model we'd want for our daughters: efficient but approachable, and very sensitive to the tricky business of being a teenage girl in the modern, social-media-dominated world (her CV runs from Benenden to Queen Anne's to Prior's Field). We like her enormously. Boarding at Sherborne means proper, full-on full-boarding, from early-morning lacrosse practice to the evening service in Sherborne Abbey. There's a great range of activities after school and at weekends: music, drama, socials and just plain old chilling out with the Sherborne boys. They do the IB and A-levels (82 per cent A*–B at A-level last year; an IB average of 36 points). IB 'fits with our ethos', says Jenny Dwyer, because it gives the girls a global outlook. There's a busy exchange programme – at one point last year, the school was hosting pupils from four different schools around the globe. We like the sound of the Women and Adventure Festival (speakers included an Atlantic rower, a desert-marathon runner and a long-distance cyclist), and the senior choir's carol-singing flash mob at Waterloo Station to raise money for a local hospice. Helicopter parents, look away now: the school says that one of the benefits of full-boarding is that


Sherborne Girls



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Sherborne School

Abbey Road, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 3AP ●

Website sherborne.org
Head Ralph Barlow, acting head until December. From January 2016: Dr Dominic Luckett, PhD, previously head of Mill Hill School Pupils 580 boys. 45 day, 535 boarding Faith C of E Ages 13–18 Term fees Day: £9,175; boarding: £11,335 Oxbridge 4 places Registration No deadline; £100 fee Admission Pre-assessment day at 11; CE or school's own exam Alumni Jeremy Irons, Hugh Bonneville, Cecil Day-Lewis

At the *Tatler* Schools Awards party last September, the buzz was all about Chris Davis's abrupt departure from Sherborne, less than a week into the new academic year. The official word was that the school needed a change in 'direction of the leadership'; unofficially, we suspect that his Etonian worldview didn't help. Mr Davis had been working to improve academic standards by making entry more selective. But, says the school, acting head Ralph Barlow 'has changed all that' so that 'boys' ongoing achievements reveal their ever-increasing potential'. They're hot on monitoring boys' progress; we hear that staff-pupil relations are excellent, and the value-added stats are some of the best in the country. But with 72 per cent A*–B at A-level last year, there's still room for improvement – everywhere, that is, except the art department, which scored 100 per cent A* grades at GCSE and A-level. Sherborne's outstanding choral tradition is well known – the chapel choir sings twice-weekly in the abbey – but they've now appointed a master in charge of rock and pop. Boys have been picked to play rugby for England, cricket for county teams and sailing for Great Britain. They join up with Sherborne Girls for drama productions, ranging from 'schoolboy farce to a viscerally powerful *Duchess of Malfi*'. Old Shirburnian Hugh Bonneville opened the new drama studio, and the school was used as a backdrop in *The Imitation Game* (Alan Turing was an old boy). New head Dr Dominic Luckett arrives from Mill Hill School in January.

Stonar

Cottles Park, Atworth, Wiltshire SN12 8NT ●

Website stonarschool.com
Head Dr Sally Divall, PhD, since 2014; previously deputy head Pupils 221 girls. 107 day, 114 boarding Faith Non-denom Ages 11–18 Term Fees Day £5,265 boarding £9,500 Oxbridge None Registration No deadline; £75 fee Admission School's own exam and previous school's report Alumnae Romola Garai, event riders Georgie Spence and Lucy Wiegersma
Prep: Head Mark Brain Pupils 121 day and boarding: 42 boys, 79 girls Ages 2–11 Term fees Day: £3,665; boarding: £6,485

Turbulent times at Stonar last year, with the sudden departure of headmaster Toby Nutt. We're assured his replacement, former deputy Dr Sally Divall, is more than up to the job. She has picked up many of Mr Nutt's initiatives: the school joined the international schools consortium NACE last year, so has a global footprint. The prep is now fully co-ed, and they'll be taking boys into the senior school from next year. The newly refurbished sixth-form dorms are all light and space, and the other houses are being upgraded (dining and changing facilities are due a facelift). The school prides itself on the individual levels of care on offer. Artists-in-residence are moving into the arts centre, to provide workshops for pupils. Stonar is best known for its equestrian prowess. On its 100 acres there are indoor and outdoor arenas, four cross-country courses and stabling for 70 horses. At 7am, boarders hop off to the stables for mucking-out duties; newcomers get to have a go on old favourite Tony the Pony. A mother is keen to point out, 'it is just part of the offering, not the main event'. Pupils have been selected for the England hockey development squad and compete in national synchronised swimming events. So no worries if hoofed animals aren't your thing – there's plenty more to Stonar than that.


Sherborne School

Westonbirt

Tetbury, Gloucestershire GL8 8QG ●

Website westonbirt.org
Head Natasha Dangerfield, BA, since 2013; previously deputy head of Harrogate Ladies' College Pupils 220 girls: 88 day, 132 boarding Faith C of E Ages 11–18 Term fees Day: £7,100; boarding: £10,500 Oxbridge Occasional Registration No deadline; £100 fee Admission CE or school's own exam, interview and previous school's report Alumnae Lady Natasha Rufus Isaacs, TV presenter Ruth Watson
Prep: Head Neil Shaw Pupils 148 day and boarding; 65 boys, 83 girls Age 3–11 Term fees Day: £3,650; boarding: £6,490

Westonbirt has been quietly educating girls since 1928 but now, with go-getting head Natasha Dangerfield at the reins, it's making one hell of a noise. Its location, near Tetbury, puts polo (Beaufort), hunting (Beaufort again) and Cirencester on its doorstep. The setting is stunning: an ornate mansion and 220 acres of parkland; some of the dorms are truly stately and have listed painted ceilings. In many ways it's quintessentially English, yet pupils hail from 22 countries. About two-thirds board and most stay at weekends, and small class sizes and warm pastoral care ensure there's plenty of support. There's been lots of refurbishment (library, study rooms, common rooms, sixth-form block), and Macs and iPads are now standard. RE, Mandarin and photography A-levels are new, and the Inspiring Women Seminar for the sixth-form is stirring up girls' ambition. Westonbirt is in the top five per cent in the country for value added, and pupils fulfil their potential in diverse areas: four girls play national lacrosse; three were offered unconditional places at Central Saint Martins; and one violinist reached the regional finals of Young Musician of the Year. We are also big fans of the Skills for Life programme, which means pupils leave knowing how to sew and how to control their finances – well, these things count.

MAKE THE GRADE

Lucullus Educational Consultants are a crack team helping Russian families gain entry to Britain's leading schools and find the right fit for their children. And they can help you too



ANDREW STAPLES, FOUNDER
Old Cranleighan, graduate of Durham University and London Business School



INESSA KHVOSTOVA, MANAGING DIRECTOR
With 20 years' experience in educational consultancy, Inessa has placed more than 500 children at top British schools



ROBIN BADHAM-THORNHILL, SCHOOLS AND ASSESSMENTS ADVISOR
Headmaster, Summer Fields School (1997-2010), a feeder school to Eton. *Tatler* Headmaster of the Year 2006

Choosing your child's school can be a difficult process. There is an abundance of top-notch independent schools in the UK and deciding on the right one for your child can be tricky. Trickier still is the battle of getting your child into that dream school once the decision has been made. Is it true you need to put names down at birth? How do you prepare your child for assessments? Is there a formula that can be followed? Running this educational gauntlet becomes all the more complicated for foreign families. Families who are trying not only to get to grips with the application procedure of a particular school, but with the entire British education system. That's where Lucullus Educational Consultants come in.

Founder, Andrew Staples, had heard head teachers express concerns about Russian pupils in their schools. Many children were clearly unprepared for the academic and social challenges of UK public school life. There was simply too much for them to take in too soon. Andrew saw the need to offer them a preliminary grounding in British education. As he says, 'I realised there was a huge demand in Russia for expertise which can only come from those who know the system from the inside.' Having worked in Russia since 1992, Andrew Staples knows *both* systems. So, the development of Lucullus Educational Consultants in Moscow was a natural step. The team is comprised of British and Russian nationals – those that know the UK system backwards because they have been educated in it or worked in it. Robin Badham-Thornhill has an intimate working knowledge of the reputations, cultures and priorities of UK public schools. He also has many contacts within the public school network, who trust his opinions and whose advice he trusts. The Russian contingent have been in educational consultancy since 1994 and have huge experience in the successful placement of Russian children. So what exactly does Lucullus do? They organise every aspect of school selection, as well as revision courses, tutoring (both in Russia and the UK), university and career advice, and guardianship.

'Unlike many of our competitors, we do not work as agents who represent a particular school; we represent the interests of the child and their family'

Inessa Khvostova
MANAGING DIRECTOR

As Robin Badham-Thornhill, Schools and Assessments Advisor, puts it: 'In my experience Russian families have preconceived ideas about what is the best school or university for their son or daughter. It can be difficult to understand what makes each school unique without insider knowledge.' Inessa Khvostova, Managing Director, adds 'we offer ongoing support through guardianship and academic tutoring and do not simply leave our clients' children at the door.' Selecting a school is about creating a match. It is crucial that the school's way of life as a whole is suitable for the child. Lucullus Educational Consultants are ideal for any parent who wants to give their child the very best start.

HOW CAN THEY HELP?

ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT
PLACEMENT into school (prep, public, university)
TUITION
GUARDIANSHIP
CAREER ADVICE

Lucullus Educational Consultants are based in various countries around the world — Russia, the UK and Spain, to name but three — giving them an intimate working knowledge of diverse cultures in relation to the preliminary grounding that is required for your child to enter the British educational system. For more information, please visit lucullus.co.uk

PHOTOGRAPH: YANA KORN

MIDLANDS

Bromsgrove School

Worcester Road, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B61 7DU ● ●
Website bromsgrove-school.co.uk
Head Peter Clague, BA, since 2014; previously head of Kristin School, Auckland Pupils 934. Day: 302 boys, 209 girls; boarding: 242 boys, 181 girls Faith C of E Ages 13–18 Term fees Day: £4,940; boarding: £10,810 Oxbridge Occasional Registration No deadline but early registration advised; £100 fee Admission CE or school's own exam, previous school's report and interview Alumni Rugby players Ben Foden and Andy Goode, AE Housman
Prep: Head Jacqui Deval-Reed Pupils 729 day and boarding: 377 boys, 352 girls Ages 3–13 Term fees Day: £4,475; boarding: £8,775

Bromsgrove has its finger firmly on the pulse. Home is Worcestershire, but pupils hail from more than 35 countries. Indeed, head Peter Clague is from New Zealand. Entrance is not hugely selective, although demand for places has been pushing up the standard of applicants. The results achieved are super: 87 per cent A*–B at A-level last year and an IB average of 38 points. However, the school is keen to point out that they're more interested in the rankings of their alumni in later life than at 18. It's this down-to-earth, all-embracing attitude that allows students to flourish, whether taking part in a production of *King Lear* at the Edinburgh Fringe, having a go at CCF or trying to build a racing car. The 1st XV rugby team dethroned reigning champions Dulwich College in the final of the NatWest Schools Cup – what a coup. A new, off-campus, sixth-form boarding house opened last year and the next major project will be a performing-arts centre. Bromsgrove's student body is vast – over 1,500 pupils in the prep and senior school combined but it's very friendly and integrated. As Mr Clague says, 'Bromsgrove is the gentlest of giants.'

Ellesmere College

Ellesmere, Shropshire SY12 9AB ● ●
Website ellesmere.com
Head Brendan Wignall, MA, since 1996; previously registrar and head of English at Denstone College, Staffordshire Pupils 417. Day: 134 boys, 61 girls; boarding: 141 boys, 81 girls Faith C of E Ages 13–18 Term fees Day: £5,712; boarding: £9,996 Oxbridge 2 places Registration No deadline; £50 fee Admission Assessment day and interview Alumni RFU chairman Bill Beaumont, Lady Edwina Grosvenor
Prep: Head Sharon Owen Pupils 144 day and boarding: 100 boys, 44 girls Ages 7–13 Term fees Day: £3,927; boarding: £7,773

Ellesmere is a new addition to the guide, and we've been hearing some good things about it on our well-developed grapevine – located way up in north Shropshire, it's a bit of a hidden gem. However, its achievements are far from parochial. They offer A-levels (67 per cent A*–B) and IB (31 points in 2014). In last year's IB, one pupil scored the top 45 marks and won a place at Cambridge, but leavers are just as likely to go to Oxford Brookes; 'One size fits all does not apply to this school,' say Ellesmere. Sport is super and fostered by academies: they have one of the best swimming teams in the country and were placed sixth in a national adult league. The girls' tennis team have been Aegon National Champions three times in the past four years; the mixed-doubles squad represents Team GB at international level. There are some well-known all-girls schools that would kill for that kind of success. The Arts Council awarded Ellesmere an Artsmark Gold for excellence in art, music, dance, drama and media, and they take their stage productions on tour in the USA. What's more, a parent describes it as 'a jolly place' – and we say it's jolly well worth a look.

King Edward's School

Edgbaston Park Road, Birmingham B15 2UA ●
Website kes.org.uk
Head John Claughton, MA, since 2006; previously head of Solihull School Pupils 850 day boys Faith C of E Ages 11–18 Term fees £4,044 Oxbridge 12 places Registration By November of year before entry; £25 fee Admission School's own exam and interview Alumni Lee Child, JRR Tolkien

'Get rid of the word "public,"' scolds chief master John Claughton when we have the temerity to mention public schools. '"Independent" is far better.' Knuckles duly rapped, sir. In Mr Claughton's words: 'This is probably the most socially and ethnically diverse independent school in this country.' The stats: 800 candidates apply each year from 300 different junior schools; 40 out of 125 boys in each year group are on assisted places; 100 in the school have free places. Over 60 per cent of pupils are Asian and around 20 per cent are Muslim – there's a big outreach programme to engage with the local community. Life here is all about the intellectual challenge: the school hit its highest-ever GCSE results in 2014 (92 per cent A*–A grades) and has been IB-only since 2010 – 'an indication of the seriousness of our intellectual purpose'. If this all sounds rather worthy, don't worry


Bromsgrove School



● BOYS ● GIRLS ●● MIXED



ILLUSTRATIONS: BOB WILSON/PHOSPHOR ART. BACKGROUND: SHUTTERSTOCK

– there's plenty of light relief in the form of sport (hockey and water polo are particularly strong), music and drama of an exceptionally high standard (one boy was the leader of the National Youth Orchestra for the fourth time) and scores of societies, trips and expeditions. Friday afternoons are dedicated to CCF, leadership and working in the local community. 'We want pupils to leave prepared for all that life has to offer,' Mr Claughton says. He retires in July 2016 after a very successful decade. We will miss him (although our knuckles might not).



King Edward VI High School for Girls

Edgbaston Park Road, Birmingham B15 2UB ●

Website kehs.org.uk
Head Ann Clark, MA, since 2013; previously deputy head of Heanor Gate Science College, Derbyshire **Pupils** 560 day girls **Faith** Non-denom **Ages** 11–18 **Term fees** £3,936 **Oxbridge** 11 places **Registration** By January of year of entry; £25 fee **Admission** School's own exam **Alumnae** Actress Lucy Davies, Paralympian Susie Rogers

You may have read about the identical twins who between them notched up 14 A*s at A-level, with distinctions in their AQA Bacc, and gold awards in the national Chemistry Olympiad, while finding time to represent the West Midlands at hockey. Incredibly impressive, but such achievements aren't all that remarkable here. It's quite normal for girls to take five or six A-levels – 90 per cent of last year's grades were A*–B. The list of accolades won goes on and on: four girls won the national Extreme Physics competition; another had an article on congenital heart disease published in the *American Journal of Medicine*; yet another was named one of the Royal Geographical Society's Young Geographers of the Year. They take their sport seriously too – KEHS teams won county and regional heats of the national schools hockey and netball championships in three age groups (international players on the teaching staff might have something to do with it). They share a performing-arts centre with their peers at KES and collaborate on productions and music recitals. You've guessed it – these are fab too. There are five applicants for every place; head Ann Clark is looking for 'creative, innovative thinkers', not girls who've been intensively coached. Pupils are a scarily capable bunch but they manage to be modest and laidback with it.



The Leys

Trumpington Road, Cambridge CB2 7AD ● ●

Website theleys.net
Head Martin Priestley, MA, since 2014; previously head of Warminster School **Pupils** 566. Day: 118 boys, 76 girls; boarding: 215 boys, 157 girls **Faith** Methodist **Ages** 11–18 **Term fees** Day: £6,715; boarding: £10,045 **Oxbridge** 4 places **Registration** At least 18 months in advance; £100 fee **Admission** School's own exam **Alumni** JG Ballard, Martin Bell, Christopher Hitchens

The Leys is the only co-ed boarding school in Cambridge. It sits on a leafy 75-acre campus at the edge of the city, and is popular with local parents who love the home-boarding option, when pupils can stay until 9pm doing all the activities available to boarders, plus prep. An insider says that the Leys is a 'truly friendly school', and the community has welcomed head Martin Priestley (almost two years into his reign) with open arms. We hear that the pupils, in particular, are fans. Having Cambridge on your doorstep has its obvious pros – academic links and specialist sports coaches – but back on campus, the new, contemporary Great Hall is a hi-tech hub for the school to show off its artistic, dramatic and scientific prowess. Continuing on the tech streak, iPads are standard issue throughout the school from this September and they now offer a computer science GCSE. Academically, the Leys scored a very respectable 73.6 per cent A*–B at A-level last year, plus a smattering of Oxbridge places. We sense a push on standards in the classroom, with the introduction of two new academic societies and an academic prefect position. There's lots of sport; hockey is strong and the girls' volleyball team won the National Independent Schools beach tournament. Lots of trips too: a Himalayan expedition, a South Africa sports tour and an exchange to Japan, among others.

Malvern College

College Road, Malvern, Worcestershire WR14 3DF ● ●

Website malverncollege.org.uk
Head Antony Clark, MA, since 2008; previously head of Gresham's School **Pupils** 675. Day: 85 boys, 62 girls; boarding: 282 boys, 246 girls **Faith** C of E **Ages** 13–18 **Term fees** Day: £7,747; boarding: £11,687 **Oxbridge** 8 places **Registration** At least two years in advance advised; £127 fee **Admission** CE or school's own exam and interview **Alumni** CS Lewis, Jeremy Paxman, Dominic Sandbrook

This wonderful Worcestershire school celebrates its 150th birthday this year, and the festivities kicked off with the opening of



King Edward VI High School for Girls

the state-of-the-art Razak Science Centre. Najib Razak, Old Malvernian and Prime Minister of Malaysia, cut the ribbon himself. Pupils live among green hills in one of 11 houses with a lovely family feel; lots of boarding staff have young children and dogs, and everyone dines in-house. However, Malvern has a strong international bent and head Antony Clark (gentle, but commands huge respect) says this is the sort of place where 'European royalty and rosy-cheeked locals are equally at home'. The school introduced the IB yonks ago and about 50 per cent of pupils opt for it over A-levels. One girl achieved a perfect score of 45 last year; the A-level group totted up 72 per cent A*–B. Pupils are as likely to leave for the Russell Group as Harvard or Yale, and the school opens Malvern Chengdu this autumn. Malvern is downright sporty: one spin bowler had an England call-up; the 1st XV rugby team were unbeaten on their tour of South Africa. The school has waiting lists at all entry points – only those with 'bags of team spirit' need apply, says Mr Clark.

Moreton Hall

Weston Rhyn, Oswestry, Shropshire SY11 3EW

Website moretonhallschool.com
Head Jonathan Forster, BA, since 1992; previously housemaster at Strathallan
Pupils 321 girls: 34 day, 287 boarding
Faith Non-denom **Ages** 11–18 **Term fees** Day: £8,650; boarding: £10,500
Oxbridge Occasional **Registration** Early registration advised; £150 fee
Admission CE or school's own exam
Alumnae Editor-in chief of *The Economist* Zanny Minton Beddoes, retired High Court judge Dame Linda Dobbs
Prep: Head Catherine Ford **Pupils** 93 day and boarding: 40 boys, 53 girls **Ages** 3–11 **Term fees** Day: £4,175; boarding: £6,820

Positive proof of the benefits of single-sex education – 'no glass ceilings here,' they declare. We wondered whether Shrewsbury's move to full co-education might have a negative impact on Moreton Hall, but not a bit of it: Moreton is more popular than ever. ('They seem to have scaled down their socials with Shrewsbury,' says our spy. 'But the Moreton girls don't seem too bothered about that.') Last year's centenary celebrations were a flurry of exhibitions, lectures and parties, culminating in a pageant that included everyone from the pupils to the cooks, cleaners and gardeners. No wonder head Jonathan Forster tells us he feels more energised than ever. Our spy was impressed by the new science block, with its unique medical-science faculty (two-thirds of girls took STEM subjects at A-level last year). On the academic front, the school reports 'another vintage year' – A-level results are consistently good (73 per cent A*–B grades in 2014), and it's in the top two per cent nationally for value-added. The lacrosse teams are packed with county, national and international players. We like the relaxed, unstuffy vibe – no rules and regulations because, says Mr Forster, they just don't need them – and the spirit of entrepreneurship (the pupil-run Moreton Enterprises has a turnover of £50,000-plus). Our pupil guides could not have been more delightful.


Moreton Hall



Norwich School

The Close, Norwich NR1 4DD

Website norwich-school.org.uk
Head Steffan Griffiths, MA, since 2011; previously usher at Magdalen College School **Pupils** 768 day: 485 boys, 283 girls **Faith** C of E **Ages** 11–18 **Term fees** £4,793 **Oxbridge** 22 places **Registration** By November of year before entry; £85 fee
Admission School's own exam, interview and previous school's report
Alumni Lord Ashcroft, Admiral Lord Nelson, Humphry Repton
Prep: Head John Ingham **Pupils** 275 day: 186 boys, 89 girls **Ages** 7–11 **Term fees** £4,367

Founded in 1096, Norwich is one of the oldest schools on the planet and much of the campus is housed within the city's historic Cathedral Close. The cathedral forms an integral part of daily life: assemblies with thunderous renditions of 'Jerusalem' kick off the day and leavers are known to shed a tear when they sing for the last time. Under head Steffan Griffiths the school continues to impressively flex its academic muscles: a record 22 Oxbridge offers last year; 88 per cent A*–B at A-level. There was particular success on the sports field too: the 1st XV rugby team and the U18 and U14 girls' hockey squads had winning seasons; and pupils compete nationally in equestrianism and rowing. A truly top-notch day school and a Norfolk institution, it attracts two applicants per place in both the lower and senior schools (juniors trialling to be choristers must win a place first). Many pupils commute up to an hour from the sticks – to be greeted with breakfast at 7.45am. Getting involved with the local community is essential, whether performing in the touring Young Norfolk Arts Festival or in *West Side Story* at the Norwich Playhouse, but the school is also fostering its global links with a new programme for international, homestay students. One past pupil sums it up when he says, 'I was encouraged to be a tennis player, a musician and a good student – to spread out my talents.'



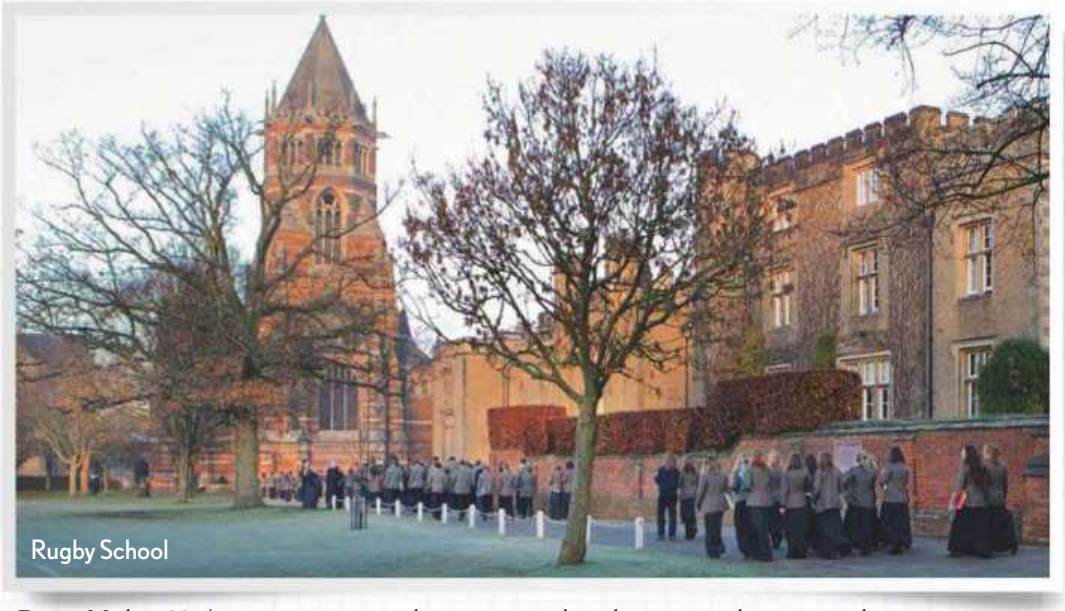
Oakham School

Chapel Close, Market Place, Oakham, Rutland LE15 6DT

Website oakham.rutland.sch.uk
Head Nigel Lashbrook, BA, since 2009; previously head of King's School, Somerset **Pupils** 869. Day: 193 boys, 195 girls; boarding: 242 boys, 239 girls
Faith C of E **Ages** 13–18 **Term fees** Day: £6,260; boarding: £10,370 **Oxbridge** 10 places **Registration** Early registration advised; £100 fee **Admission** CE or school's own exam, interview and previous school's report **Alumni** Matthew Macfadyen, cricketer Stuart Broad,
Prep: Head Val Harvey **Pupils** 177 day and boarding: 86 boys, 91 girls **Ages** 10–13 **Term fees** Day: £5,550; boarding: £8,450

Oakham is an unselfconscious mix of the ancient and venerable, the modern and thrusting. It is a big beast; half boys, half girls, and they offer 'day boarding' here – a minimum of three nights a week – alongside the full option. Head Nigel Lashbrook explains that it's 'not an economic decision, rather, a lifestyle choice'. Sixth-formers can take either A-levels or IB: six pupils scored an impressive 40-plus points in the IB last year, while A-levels had a solid performance with 71 per cent A*–B. Oakham was awarded

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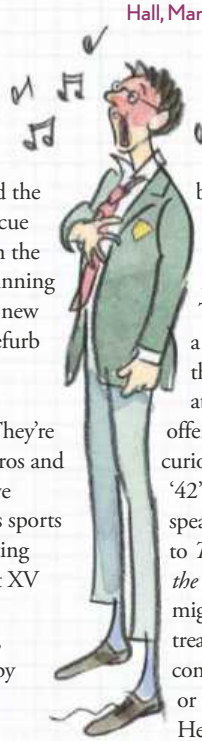

Rugby School

a Design Mark in 2014 to recognise its excellence in DT: big hauls of Arkwright Scholarships are standard and pupils have left to work in F1 and aeronautical development and design. In 2014, 26 leavers went to medical school and 10 to Oxbridge (the new Oxbridge mentor has clearly come up with the goods). Close enough to the diversions of Oakham town yet campus-like in its set-up, the school boasts acres of playing fields and a cohort of top sports coaches: rugby and hockey are very strong (four old boys were selected to play in last year's Six Nations). Oakhamians are also accomplished musicians, and two pupils won the Royal Opera House Fanfare Competition last year. Well, with 600 music lessons timetabled a week and 80 concerts annually, they've had a lot of practice.

Oundle

Oundle, Peterborough
PE8 4GH ●●
Website oundleschool.org.uk
Head Sarah Kerr-Dineen, MA, since September; previously Warden of Forest School, London Pupils 1,100. Day: 126 boys, 121 girls; boarding: 519 boys, 334 girls Faith C of E Ages 11–18 Term fees Day: £7,115; boarding: £11,000 Oxbridge 14 places Registration No deadline; £125 fee Admission CE or school's own exam and interview Alumni Richard Dawkins, Cecil Lewis, WWF founder Sir Peter Scott

It's all happening at Oundle. One of the advantages of being part of such a ginormous, full-boarding, co-ed community is that whatever your enthusiasm, you're bound to find a group of like-minded souls keen to pursue it with you, be it marching with the CCF band, acting at the Edinburgh Fringe, or performing plays in Mandarin. We love the sound of the new Trivium course for third-formers. It's based on 'interestingness', and introduces pupils to new ideas and cultures – the poetry of Yeats, say, or the art of Berlin. Oundle's economists won the national Bank of England Target Two Point Zero Challenge last year; engineers won Arkwright Scholarships; chemists won gold awards in the Cambridge Chemistry Challenge. Last year's A-level results took a slight dip (84 per cent A*–B against 90 per cent in 2013), but the percentage of A*s remained the same at 25 per cent. And (cue fanfare) work has begun on the final phase of the award-winning SciTec campus, bringing a new maths department and a refurb of the engineering centre, alongside the science and technology departments. They're renovating the existing Astros and adding two more, which we assume will make Oundle's sports teams even more intimidating to their opposition (the 1st XV rugby team made it to the semis of the NatWest Cup, but were narrowly beaten by Bromsgrove). Great town/gown relations and a loyal house system keep everyone on track. We salute Oundle's outgoing head, Charles Bush, who has put the school on the national map in his 10 years here.



The Perse School

Hills Road, Cambridge
CB2 8QF ●●
Website perse.co.uk
Head Edward Elliott, MA, since 2008; previously deputy head Pupils 1,091 day: 721 boys, 370 girls Faith Non-denom Ages 11–18 Term fees £5,141 Oxbridge 31 places Registration One year before entry; £75 fee Admission School's own exam and interview Alumni Sir Peter Hall, Marius Goring, David Gilmour
Prep: Head James Piper Pupils 434 day: 264 boys, 170 girls Ages 3–11 Term fees £4,661

Starter for 10: who won both the senior and junior titles at the Schools' Challenge general-knowledge competition? The Perse, of course. This is a place where clever clogs will thrive – 92 per cent A*–B at A-level; 31 Oxbridge offers – and where intellectual curiosity is stoked. Take the '42' programme of visiting speakers (we love the reference to *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*), when pupils might learn about a pioneering treatment for nut allergies, computer-game programming or Elizabethan spy networks. Head Edward Elliott and his slick team go a long way to inspire pupils: one budding lawyer was able to hold a mock trial in a Cambridge court and financial challenges are laid on for wannabe traders. If you want, a Perse education can start at the age of three and continue until 18. However, what struck us was that when asked about their school, few pupils focused on the academic bonuses, preferring to tell us about the crazy drama productions, their wonderful teachers or the hugely popular Exploration Society. Four groups reached the Pro Corda Chamber Music Festival national finals last year and the 1st netball team are county champions. The school has also managed to acquire 21 acres nearby for playing fields. It seems that whatever the question, the Perse has the answer.

Rugby School

Rugby, Warwickshire
CV22 5EH ●●
Website rugbyschool.net
Head Peter Green, MA, since 2014; previously head of Ardingly College Pupils 806. Day: 74 boys, 80 girls; boarding: 360 boys, 292 girls Faith C of E Ages 11–18 Term fees Day: £6,899; boarding: £10,995 Oxbridge 11 places Registration Two years before entry; £150 fee Admission CE or school's own exam, interview and previous school's report Alumni Rupert Brooke, Lewis Carroll, AN Wilson

Rugby's new head Peter Green arrived from Ardingly College last September. It's not easy to take over a school at the top of its game or to succeed such a popular head as Patrick Derham, but Mr Green is an immensely likeable sort and a very safe pair of hands. This is a proper seven-days-a-week boarding school, with a great record for pastoral care (in-house dining makes for a nice 'extended-family' vibe). Innovation was the watchword in Derham's day: Rugby pioneered the Extended Project sixth-form qualification – now taken up by schools across the country – and last year more than 90 per cent of EPQ grades were A*–B (82 per cent A*–B at A-level). They're still hot on curriculum development, so, for example, history students have five different A-level choices, from Medieval to

DID YOU KNOW?

A new rose to mark the 400th anniversary of the Perse School was launched at this year's Chelsea Flower Show

Revolutions. We weren't surprised to hear that Rugby had been voted best of the best for philanthropy by an independent schools guide, ahead of Eton and Christ's Hospital. In the past 11 years, the Arnold Foundation has raised over £17m to provide 100 per cent financial support for boarders; a third of the school's pupils receive some form of scholarship or bursary. Two boys are in the under-18 England rugby squad; another is in the under-21 polo team and a girl is in the England netball squad. The senior tennis boys won the LTA national finals. Kudos as well to the girl who is under-19 British champion in wakeboarding – that's quite something for a landlocked county.

Shrewsbury School

The Schools, Shrewsbury, SY3 7BA

Website shrewsbury.org.uk Head Mark Turner, MA, since 2010; previously head of Abingdon Pupils 769. Day: 115 boys, 24 girls; boarding: 504 boys, 126 girls Faith C of E Ages 13–18 Term fees Day: £7,660; boarding: £10,940 Oxbridge 12 places Registration Two years before entry; £100 fee Admission CE or school's own exam and interview Alumni Charles Darwin, Lord Heseltine, Michael Palin

In his efficient, ex-military manner, Mark Turner is working wonders at Shrewsbury. PR might not be his strongest suit, but who cares? It doesn't seem two minutes since we were writing about the trailblazing girls arriving in the sixth form; the first cohort of third-form girls (year 9) joined last September. They are, says Mark Turner, an 'energetic and enthusiastically talented contingent' who 'have taken Shrewsbury very much in their stride'. The hockey results from their first term speak volumes: played nine; won nine. Mr Turner oversaw Oundle's successful transition to co-education 20 years ago and is aiming to make Shrewsbury similarly 'vibrant, cutting-edge and dynamic'. He wants it to be one of the leading academic boarding schools outside London ('the Eton of the North', says one parent). If you don't get five Bs at GCSE, you're out – an effective means of improving the A-level stats (83 per cent A*–B last year), but 'mortifying for all involved', says our mole. The school is pouring millions into major capital projects – work is almost complete on a new academic block with a lecture theatre and 19 classrooms. Upgrades to the theatre and library are next, as well as major improvements to the sports facilities. The investment in the cricket centre is paying dividends – they report, with justified satisfaction, victories over Oundle and Eton. In conclusion, says our spy, 'a very happy atmosphere... all much more relaxed than on my last visit'. Credit to those girls, we think.

Stephen Perse Foundation

Union Road, Cambridge CB2 1HF

Website stephenperse.com Head Tricia Kelleher, MA, since 2001; previously deputy head of Brentwood School, Essex Pupils 577 day: 17 boys, 560 girls Faith Non-denom Ages 11–18 Term fees £5,315 Oxbridge 15 places Registration By November of year before entry; £75 fee Admission School's own exam and interview Alumni Pentathlete Stephanie Cook, racing driver Vicki Butler-Henderson Prep: Head Katie Milne Pupils 286 day: 68 boys, 218 girls Ages 3–11 Term fees £4,560

Another year at Stephen Perse, another set of sky-high results: pupils scored 96 per cent A*–B at A-level and an average IB score of 40. A quarter of sixth-formers wind up at Oxbridge, although some prefer to opt for MIT or Princeton instead. Glittering grades may be a constant here, but Stephen Perse's teaching methods are constantly evolving: they are now a 'publishing school', and their iTunes U courses and iBooks Textbooks, written by staff, are available globally. The senior school is one iPad per pupil and has a new 'innovation room' (with 'ideas paint' so, when inspired, anyone can write on the wall). The junior school has a library configured around the idea of storytelling and was featured in the *Guardian*'s list of most innovative learning spaces. The school also reports sporting brilliance: three netball teams reached the regional finals last year; and stunning dramatics: *Chicago* at Cambridge's Mumford Theatre was a joy. Surprisingly, students are not overwrought but, rather, 'clever, witty and relaxed', as one insider observed. Of course, the biggest change of late has been the transition to accepting boys: the junior school and sixth form are fully co-ed and the senior school is busily preparing for the new cohort of boys in 2017. But, lest you forget, this was the school on which St Trinian's was based – they've even got a letter from Ronald Searle to prove it.



Uppingham

Uppingham, Rutland LE15 9QE

Website uppingham.co.uk Head Richard Harman, MA, since 2006; previously head of Aldenham School Pupils 790. Day: 6 boys, 4 girls; boarding: 457 boys, 323 girls Faith C of E Ages 13–18 Term fees Day: £7,933; boarding: £11,333 Oxbridge 10 places Registration Three years before entry; £125 fee Admission CE or school's own exam, interview and previous school's report Alumni Sir Charles Dunstone, Stephen Fry, Rick Stein, musician Harry Judd

If you find yourself next to an Uppingham parent at dinner and ask them to define the school's USP, we bet they'll mention a) the boarding, and b) the music. Of the 790 pupils, all but 10 board. And when they say full-boarding, they mean it – one exeat each side of half term. The houses here are smaller than elsewhere, so – in the words of an insider – 'it's a nice, friendly school'. Uppingham's music has always been sublime: the whole school gets together in chapel on Friday mornings for 'congers' (singing practice) and the chapel choir rocked Raffles hotel on their recent tour of South-East Asia (we'd love to have witnessed it). Sport is important too: teams are county champions in almost everything, across the age ranges – the under-16 hockey girls for the eighth time in nine years. And one boy set a new school basketball record, bagging a cool 54 points against local rivals Oakham. There are new buildings at every turn – the redevelopment programme started with the hugely popular sports centre, and now they've opened the magnificent new science facility – 17 labs and a lecture theatre – and renovated 'the Leo' (the Leonardo arts centre). There's no great academic pressure here ('balance in all things is my mantra,' says head Richard Harman), but they get the results – last year's A-level grades were 85 per cent A*–B, with 70 per cent of pupils going on to Russell Group unis, and 10 to Oxbridge. Mr Harman leaves next summer; no word on his successor as we go to press.

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Headmistress
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Mrs Emma Goldsmith
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Headmaster
King's College School, Wimbledon



Dr Niall Hamilton
Senior admissions tutor
Marlborough College



Mrs Rosemary Herbert
Registrar
Sussex House School



Mrs Sally Hobbs
Headmistress
Orchard House
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Mr James Hooke
Headmaster
Harrodian



Mr Tony Little
Headmaster
Eton
(2002-2015)



Mrs Helen Lowe
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Bute House



Mr Eddy Newton
Principal
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Mrs Samantha Price
Headmistress
Benenden



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Wellington College
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Dulwich College

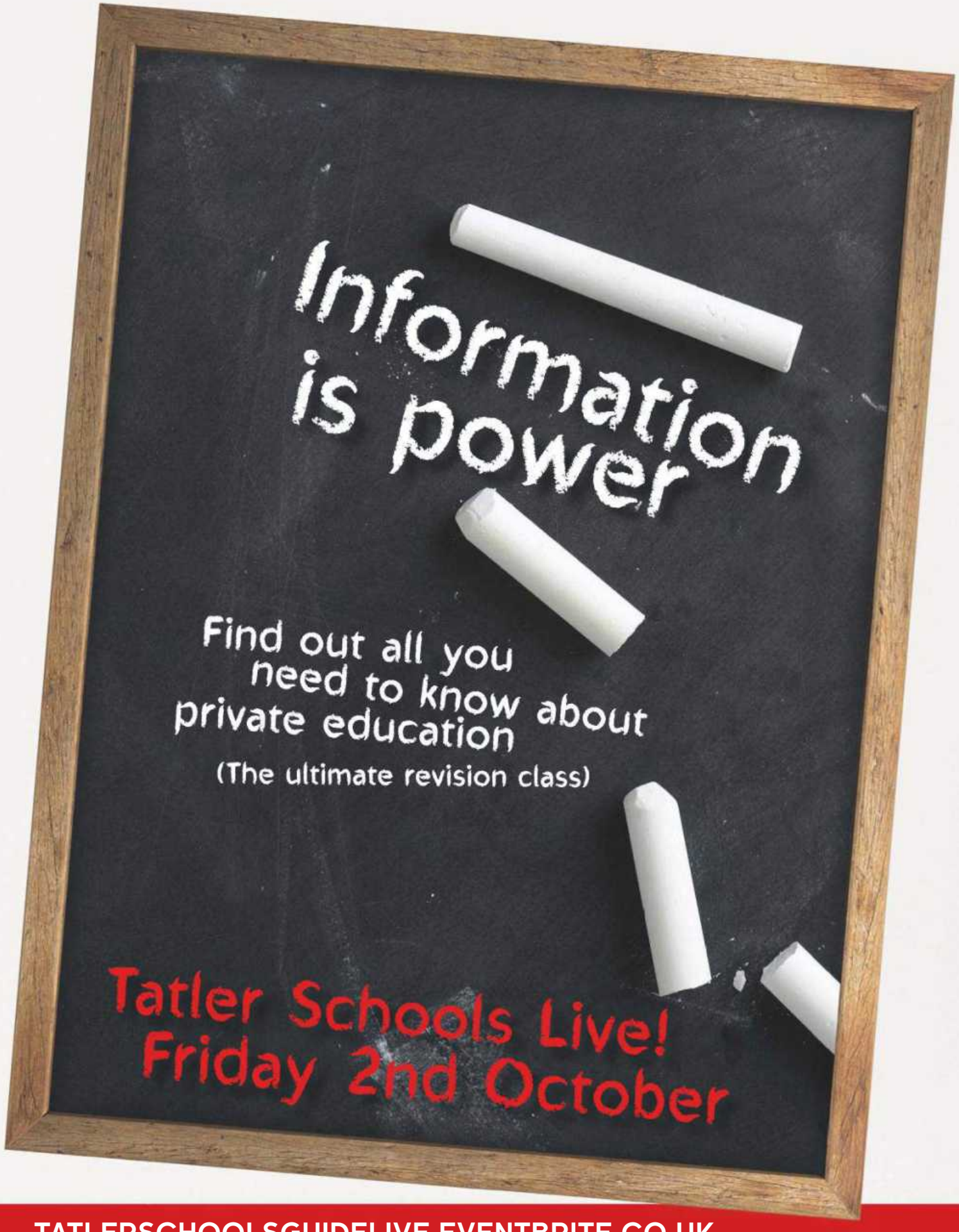


Mr Ben Thomas
Headmaster
Thomas's, Battersea



Dr Anthony Wallersteiner
Headmaster
Stowe School

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NORTH & SCOTLAND


Fettes

Ampleforth

Ampleforth, York, YO62 4ER ●●
Website college.ampleforth.org.uk
Head David Lambon, MEng, since 2014; previously head of St Malachy's College, Belfast **Pupils** 607. Day: 53 boys, 42 girls; boarding: 367 boys, 145 girls **Faith** RC **Ages** 13–18 **Term fees** Day: £7,516; boarding: £10,911 **Oxbridge** 5 places **Registration** No deadline; £100 fee **Admission** CE, interview and previous school's report **Alumni** Lord Fellowes of West Stafford, Sir Antony Gormley, Rupert Everett

Ampleforth's first lay head, David Lambon, says, 'Exam results are easy; the ethos is the hard part' – and Ampleforth has ethos in spades. Founded on Benedictine principles, this Catholic school furnishes its pupils with a moral and spiritual education too. (Incidentally, A-levels were a respectable 74 per cent A*–B last year, with five Oxbridge offers.) The school and monastery happily coexist: fewer monks teach nowadays but, conversely, they are more involved than ever as chaplains in the boarding houses. Yorkshire through and through, the school nonetheless attracts sophisticated, continental types and lays on chaperones and shuttles for the speedy London train service. A mole says there is a 'renewed energy', and change is happening apace: extended riding facilities and dance studios are planned; a new SAT course – for students applying to US universities – launched last year (the only school in the north of England to have one); there's a new sports-development programme run by former Wales rugby player Will James; and the sixth-form curriculum is being overhauled. And let's hear it for the Ampleforth girls, who are thriving: one is playing hockey for England U18, another is off to Oxford to read biochemistry and the CCF was led by a girl for the first time in the school's history. There is much that, happily, remains the same: the awe-inspiring valley setting, the relaxed dress code, the sixth-form pub on campus and the fact that the school is always called SHAC by pupils (Senior House Ampleforth College, in case you wondered).

Fettes

Carrington Road, Edinburgh EH4 1QX ●●
Website fettes.com
Head Michael Spens, MA, since 1998; previously head of Caldicott School **Pupils** 565. Day: 83 boys, 64 girls; boarding: 211 boys, 207 girls **Faith** Inter-denom **Ages** 13–18 **Term fees** Day: £8,125; boarding: £10,415 **Oxbridge** 8 places **Registration** Early registration advised; £50 fee **Admission** CE or school's own exam, interview and previous school's report **Alumni** Tony Blair, industrialist Sir Bill Gammell, advertising executive David Ogilvy
Prep: Head Adam Edwards **Pupils** 194 day and boarding: 101 boys, 93 girls **Ages** 7–13 **Term fees** Day: £4,820; boarding: £7,530

The best thing about Fettes? 'The amazing sense of pride that you're a pupil,' says one. A mother praises the school's 'very strong identity', from those distinctive magenta-and-brown blazers to the staunchly loyal alumni ('To be a Fettesian is for life, not just for A-levels'). Head Michael Spens, who will retire in 2018, has been the driving force behind all this. He's an impressive, articulate figure with a keen eye for the future as well as the present. Last June, exactly 150 years after the foundation stone was laid for Fettes' magnificent gothic towers, work began on Fettes North – a £10m project consisting of new art and music schools and 25 classrooms. There's already a new Astroturf – hockey is a big deal here – and, in music, one pupil was the youngest finalist in the BBC's Young Traditional Musician 2015, and another won the Steinway Piano Competition. Needless to say, it's increasingly hard to get in – demand for sixth-form places is particularly high. Sixth-formers can choose A-levels or IB – a third of last year's IB students scored over 40 points; 77 per cent of A-levels were graded A*–B. Further down the school, Fettes Prep, founded in 2000, is really beginning to thrive, with plans to expand. We were impressed by the mixed upper-sixth boarding house (don't panic, there's a thumbprint recognition system to prevent corridor-creeping), by Mrs Spens's mindfulness lessons and by the highlight of 'failure week' – a concert where those who have never performed in public get the chance to face their fears.

Giggleswick

Settle, North Yorkshire BD24 0DE ●●
Website giggleswick.org.uk
Head Mark Turnbull, MA, since 2014; previously deputy head of Eastbourne College **Pupils** 395. Day: 96 boys, 62 girls; boarding: 132 boys, 105 girls **Faith** C of E **Ages** 11–18 **Term fees** Day: £7,107; boarding: £10,378 **Oxbridge** 2 places **Registration** By December of year before entry; £150 fee **Admission** CE or school's own exam, interview, previous school's report **Alumni** Soprano Sarah Fox, Richard Whiteley
Prep: Head James Mundell



DID YOU KNOW?

James Bond supposedly attended Fettes... although he never had a 'licence to kill' on the school's new rifle range

Pupils 97 day and boarding: 48 boys, 49 girls Ages 3–11 Term fees Day: £3,912; boarding: £6,515

All credit to Giggleswick's former head Geoffrey Boult – 'always smiling... completely eccentric,' says a pupil. As well as improving academic standards in his 13 years here, he placed great importance on the extracurricular stuff: sports, drama, art – and generally just getting stuck in. His successor is Mark Turnbull, formerly deputy head at Eastbourne College. 'Gigg' is small enough that everyone knows each other, big enough to have all the right facilities. Pupils may not all hit the academic heights (49 per cent A*–B at A-level last year; please note two Oxford places, for veterinary science and engineering), but there are BTEC diplomas in sport and business for the less exam-minded. One girl tells us: 'The teachers put in as much effort as you do. The harder you work, the more passion and vigour they support you with.' They've launched an elite sports programme to nurture potential county-level players. A Year 8 girl represented Yorkshire at the English Schools Athletic Association cross-country championships, finishing as the highest-ranked runner in the county in her age group. We like the jaunty, red-pinstriped blazers, the awesome copper-domed chapel and the homely boarding houses (there's a popular three-night flexi option). We asked a pupil what tip she'd give new students. 'Get involved!' she replied. 'You get out of Gigg what you put into it.' The junior school is small and sweet, but the planned merger with Malsis, one of our favourite preps, did not materialise; it closed last December.

Glenalmond College

Glenalmond, Perth PH1 3RY

Website glenalmondcollege.co.uk

Head Elaine Logan, since September; previously deputy head of Loretto School Pupils 379. Day: 45 boys, 29 girls; boarding: 178 boys, 127 girls Faith Inter-denom Ages 12–18 Term fees Day: £7,105; boarding: £10,430 Oxbridge Occasional Registration No deadline; £50 fee Admission CE or school's own exam Alumni Robbie Coltrane, Lord Falconer, film director Kevin Macdonald

Founded by William Gladstone in 1847, grand Glenalmond has history etched into every wood beam and stained-glass window. New head Elaine Logan is also making history as the school's first female warden. 'We hope she will be like the Margaret Thatcher of Glenalmond,' a member of staff tells us – we await her first policy proposals with great interest. The school sits on a breathtakingly beautiful 300-acre estate, and is a traditional sort of place: uniform policy is strict but girls do wear pyjamas under their long skirts in winter to keep warm. A mother says that Glenalmond's great strengths are its 'community spirit and polite pupils'. Sport is excellent: teams excel at rugby and lacrosse, and facilities, including the golf pavilion and shooting range, have been updated recently. The pipe band is awesome, and with 145 activities on offer, 'there seems to be a place and niche for everyone', says our mole. Last year, leavers scored 67 per cent A*–B at A-level; the new William Bright Society holds lectures on everything from the *Titanic* to the SAS to feed enquiring minds. Glenalmond is full-boarding: we hear Patchell's is the sportiest house; Skrine's the most modern (with a legendary matron); and Reid's boasts its own dining hall. It's the girls, however, who are the most proud of their house colours – pink for Home and purple for Lothian.

Gordonstoun

Elgin, Moray IV30 5RF

Website gordonstoun.org.uk

Head Simon Reid, BA, since 2011; previously deputy head of Worksop College Pupils 500. Day: 35 boys, 33 girls; boarding: 266 boys, 166 girls Faith Inter-denom Ages 13–18 Term fees Day: £7,886; boarding: £10,550 Oxbridge Occasional Registration No deadline; £50 fee Admission CE or school's own exam, interview and previous school's report Alumni The Prince of Wales, Zara Tindall, William Boyd, rower Heather Stanning

Prep: Head Robert McVean Pupils 92 day and boarding: 55 boys, 37 girls Ages 8–13 Term fees Day: £4,392; boarding: £7,143

You don't have to be a hearty, outdoorsy type to really thrive at Gordonstoun, but... well, you know the rest. They call it a 'character-based education', which might mean turning out to fight a blaze with the school fire service (seriously impressive), volunteering with the mountain rescue or coastguard (ditto) or circumnavigating the UK in 80 days in the school's 80ft sail-training vessel. Four years in, head Simon Reid is well into his stride. He's proud of the 'remarkable education' that Gordonstoun offers: 'It equips the children for much more than university – it makes them resilient rather than tough or arrogant.' We were impressed by the staff (particularly those who cheerfully ferried our researcher to and from Inverness – a two-hour round trip), the sprawling 200-acre woodland campus a mile from the sandy beaches of the Moray coast, the delicious food and the personable pupils. We like the international outlook too – overseas pupils make up a third of the school, and RE is called 'international and spiritual citizenship'. The boarding houses aren't the smartest (NB: one of the boys' houses, Duffus, is off-site, which means a 20-minute walk to breakfast – bracing in winter), but a facelift is imminent. In other news: the school won the freestyle category of the Scottish Schools Pipe Band Championships. Freestyle bagpipes? We can only imagine.

Kilgraston

Bridge of Earn, Perth, PH2 9BQ

Website kilgraston.com

Head Dorothy MacGinty, BEd, since



Gordonstoun

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April; previously head of St Francis' College, Hertfordshire Pupils 192 girls: 65 day, 127 boarding Faith RC Ages 13–18 Term fees Day: £5,435; boarding: £9,285 Oxbridge Occasional Registration No deadline; £100 fee Admission Previous school's report and interview Alumnae Jockey Lucy Alexander, artist Leonie Gibbs

Prep: Head Kathryn Ebrahim Pupils 111 girls, day and boarding (6 boys in nursery) Ages 2 ½–13 Term fees £4,850; boarding: £7,095

Exciting times at Kilgraston – named Scottish Independent School of the Year by *The Sunday Times*, it celebrates its 85th birthday this year and it has a new head, Dorothy MacGinty. She is keen to encourage her girls to be 'the leaders of tomorrow' and her A Day in the Life speaker series invites the brightest and best from different industries to inspire pupils. The young ones, at Kilgraston's delightful prep in converted stables, have already cottoned on and dressed up as Michelle Obama, Marie Curie and Florence Nightingale on Character Day. Kilgraston has been leaping up the league tables: they scored 95 per cent A–C at Advanced Highers last year, and leavers head to universities in Toronto and Hong Kong, as well as Edinburgh and Cambridge. One girl is pursuing an apprenticeship with Rolls-Royce. Kilgraston may have high-flying aspirations but, as a Catholic school, its Sacred Heart ethos ensures charity and compassion are also at its core. Last year, the school's Gift Your Gear initiative distributed unused school equipment to local youth groups. Sports-wise, the school continues to produce national-level hockey and netball players, and the U16 badminton girls had a particularly victorious season. The new labs are open and whipping up enthusiasm for science – girls eagerly queued to watch the science club's lunchtime squid dissection.



The King's School, Chester

Wrexham Road, Chester CH4 7QL

Website kingschester.co.uk

Head Chris Ramsey, MA, since 2007; previously head of King's College, Taunton Pupils 747 day: 487 boys, 260 girls Faith C of E Ages 11–18 Term fees £4,141 Oxbridge 8 places Registration By January of year of entry; £50 fee Admission School's own exam, interview Alumni Actor Nickolas Grace, Olympic rower Tom James

Prep: Head Simon Malone Pupils 240 day: 166 boys, 74 girls Ages 4–11 Term fees £3,175

Few schools can lay claim to being world-record holders, but King's Chester's superstar rowers (nine have international honours) broke the Million Metre Ergo time last year, sweating it out for a heroic 18 hours. It's characteristic of the school's unpretentious, can-do attitude that pupils smashed its GCSE record, scoring 96 per cent A*–B last year (A-levels were 87 per cent A*–B). Amiable head Chris Ramsey is very proud but never complacent and says that strong pupil-teacher relationships are what make things tick. King's is a big co-ed day school and runs from reception to sixth form. Pupils from the junior school, which has just opened a new learning centre, carry on through without an exam. Blazer-clad students buzz around the facility-laden, 32-acre site, where there are plenty of extracurricular activities for them to get involved with (one afternoon a fortnight is given over to the 'enrichment' programme). King's pupils are hockey supremos – the U19 and U16 girls are county champions. One student was named the best young triathlete in the country for his age, and pupils were finalists in the National Enterprise Challenge last year. The Institute of Physics also rated the school's physics department outstanding for its progress – they were obviously impressed by the trip to CERN.

DID YOU KNOW?

Gordonstoun's volunteer student fire crew recently worked alongside professional firemen for seven hours, successfully tackling a barn blaze at a nearby farm

Lathallan School

Johnshaven, Angus DD10 0HN

Website lathallan.org.uk

Head Richard Toley, MA, since 2009; previously taught classics Pupils 124. Day: 63 boys, 28 girls; boarding: 15 boys, 18 girls Faith Non-denom Ages 12–18 Term fees Day: £5,775; boarding: £7,917 Oxbridge Occasional Registration No deadline; £35 fee Admission Assessment day at all entry levels Alumni Businessman Sir David Reid, actress Sophie Kennedy-Clark

Prep: Head James Ferrier Pupils 154 day: 81 boys, 73 girls Ages 6 months–12 Term fees Day: £4,788; boarding: £6,172

A school in a turreted castle, complete with creeping ivy and a ghost... could it be Hogwarts? Not quite, but magical things happen at Lathallan all the same. Home is Scotland's bracing east coast and head Richard Toley is keen for students to take full advantage of all that fresh air, so they've rebooted their outdoor education programme: two new zip wires and a bouldering wall – plus 'every pupil summitted a mountain at least once,' Mr Toley says proudly. What great practice for this summer's trip to Greenland. Other activities include golf and snowboarding. Lathallan's academics are steadily improving, with a pass rate of 91 per cent in Scottish Highers last year; maths and environmental studies scored particularly well. In music, the ever-popular pipe band won



Glenalmond College

the Aberdeen Highland Games pipe and drums competition. Lathallan has only been an all-through school since 2006; it's still small but growing apace (the nursery is incredibly popular) and there are plans to build a new science block, followed by a new dining room and performing-arts centre. The boarding community is also small, but the accommodation is well kitted out and some dorms have sea views. The buildings may be imposing but Lathallan is a happy, warm place to be.


Lathallan School

Loretto

Linkfield Road, Musselburgh, East Lothian EH21 7RE

Website loretto.com
Head Dr Graham Hawley, PhD, since 2014; previously head of Kelly College, Devon Pupils 425. Day: 92 boys, 81 girls; boarding: 133 boys, 119 girls Faith Non-denom Ages 12–18 Term fees Day: £6,950; boarding: £10,200 Oxbridge 4 places Registration No deadline; £50 fee Admission CE or school's own exam, interview and previous school's report Alumni Alistair Darling, Lord Lamont, Andrew Marr
Prep: Head Philip Meadows Pupils 194 day and boarding: 103 boys 91 girls Ages 3–12 Fees Day: £4,780; boarding: £6,680

New head Dr Graham Hawley and wife Rachel have wasted no time in rolling up their sleeves and throwing themselves into life at Loretto. They've listened in on lessons, cooked in the kitchen and even helped out the early-morning cleaners. Dr Hawley has a reputation for being attentive and a good listener, and we're thrilled, as the school could do with some fresh blood. Lorettonians are known for their red blazers and immaculate golfing skills. The school presides over the finest golfing academy in the country (including a pioneering new indoor centre) and they are European Schools Champions. It's not all about golf though. More than 60 pupils have national or regional caps in everything from rugby to judo, and the U15 hockey boys won the Scottish Schools Cup. Music is another strength: Loretto is an all-Steinway school; the pipe band is marvellous and they think nothing of putting on a baroque concert, complete with harpsichord. Academically, things are very solid: they scored 69 per cent A*–B at A-level last year. This is Scotland's oldest boarding school – the dorms, thankfully, have been refurbished. However, we're told it's as a day school that Loretto is really on the money. We also hear wonderful things about the junior school, delightfully called the Nippers, which is full to bursting.



Merchiston Castle School

Colinton Road, Edinburgh EH13 0PU

Website merchiston.co.uk
Head Andrew Hunter, BA, since 1998; previously housemaster at Bradfield College Pupils 470 boys: 140 day, 330 boarding Faith Inter-denom Ages 13–18 Term fees Day: £7,315; boarding: £9,900 Oxbridge 4 places Registration Early registration advised; £100 fee Admission CE or school's own exam, interview and previous school's report Alumni Physician Sir Donald Acheson, businessman Sir Peter Burt
Prep: Head Niamh Waldron Pupils 104 boys, day and boarding Ages 7–13 Term fees Day: £5,130; boarding: £7,375

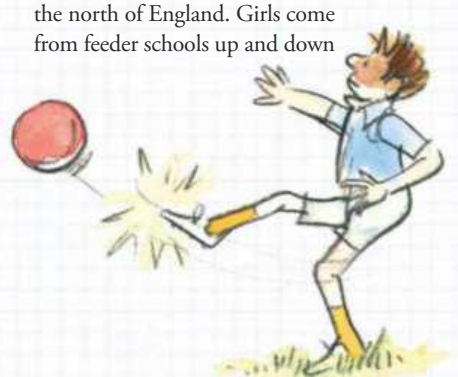
We know we always start off by telling you how sporty Merchiston is, but it's just so hard to ignore. If there were a league table for rugby, these guys would be right up there: the U16 team won the Brewin Dolphin Scottish Schools Cup last year; the U18 squad were runners-up; many boys go on to win international caps. The tennis and golf academies turn out some stellar players too. The school is set in rolling countryside but is just a stone's throw from Edinburgh. The nearest beach, ski slope, sailing school or golf course is only a short drive away, but they're building a new sports complex with a pool, two sports halls, a fitness suite and an all-weather rugby pitch. However, Merchi boys are not just athletes – the school posted the best A-level results in Scotland last year, with a terrific 81 per cent A*–B. There's a recording studio for wannabe rock stars, an award-winning design and technology department and budding poets had work published in the Young Writers' National Writing Competition. Merchiston is the only all-boys boarding school in the region and a mother says, 'They really understand how boys work.' Our insider says that pupils are 'the sort of young men every mother wants her son to be'.

Queen Margaret's

Escrick Park, York YO19 6EU

Website queenmargarets.com
Head Jessica Miles, MA, since April; previously deputy head of Leweston School, Dorset Pupils 342 girls: 69 day, 273 boarding Faith C of E Ages 11–18 Term fees Day: £6,330; boarding: £9,750 Oxbridge Occasional Registration By November of year before entry; £100 fee Admission Assessment day, school's own exam and interview Alumnae Opera singer Sarah Connolly, businesswoman Amanda Staveley

The menus at Queen Margaret's sound like an M&S advert: 'succulent meatballs', 'sizzling beef', 'melt-in-the-mouth roast lamb'. And don't get us started on the puddings. New head Jessica Miles arrived in April from Leweston School in Dorset, where she was deputy head. QM's is now the only all-girls, full-boarding school left in the north of England. Girls come from feeder schools up and down



the east coast, some from London, some from the Midlands and a strong Scottish contingent, and 20 per cent from overseas. It's 85 per cent full-boarding; even the 'day-boarders' have their own beds, and everyone stays in school on a Friday night. They're a cheerful, well-balanced lot, into everything. We like that age groups are mixed at mealtimes and there's a mass Secret Santa at Christmas. Former head Paul Silverwood did sterling work improving academic standards but, says our guide, 'we don't feel hothoused'. A splendid 85 per cent A*–B grades at A-level; one student went to Cambridge last year – the school holds weekly sessions focusing on university-interview preparation. The lacrosse teams are ferocious; there's a new sixth-form gym; and girls can keep their horses at school. We're told the choir is 'extraordinary'. The theatre is 'the hub of the school', and all the pupils squash in for 'fun and bonkers' assemblies. 'The girls are not afraid to be light-hearted,' says our upper-sixth guide. 'Everyone feels confident, maybe due to us being a small school with year-group boarding.'

Robert Gordon's College

Schoolhill, Aberdeen AB10 1FE ● ●
Website rgc.aberdeen.sch.uk
Head Simon Mills, MA, since 2014; previously head of Lomond School, Argyll and Bute **Pupils** 1,143 day: 629 boys, 514 girls **Faith** Non-denom **Ages** 11–18 **Term fees** £4,025 **Oxbridge** 2 places **Registration** By January of year of entry; £30 fee **Admission** School's own exam and interview **Alumni** Michael Gove, rugby player Chris Cusiter, singer Sandi Thom
Prep: **Head** Mollie Mennie **Pupils** 554 day: 308 boys; 246 girls **Ages** 3–11 **Term fees** £3,710

Robert Gordon's entrance is a bit of a Tardis; its imposing granite grandeur is only revealed within. The school, right in the heart of Aberdeen, recently acquired a building from the university and has transformed it into the Wood Foundation for Science and Technology – to translate, RGC now has the largest teaching facility of its kind in the UK, having splashed out £12m on 34 labs; each science has its own dedicated floor too. And as if that weren't enough, a glitzy performing-arts centre also opened to satisfy the thesps. It has a 200-seat theatre, practice rooms, an editing studio and a green room. It's a worthy spot for the school's pipe band, which is a top competitor at the Scottish Schools Pipe Band Championships. RGC is a big place with big ambitions; pupils – many of whom are from engineering and oil-industry backgrounds – work hard. New head Simon Mills says: 'We are a feet-on-the-ground school.' An impressive 80 per cent of pupils receive unconditional offers from university (most to read sciences – go figure), and iPads proliferate, which, together with an e-learning programme, results in a 'Martini education – anytime, any place, anywhere', jokes Mr Mills. The sports results are remarkable, particularly in hockey, rugby, canoeing and swimming, while clubs range from the traditional (debating and photography) to the more niche – 'Best Friends Forever' and quidditch.

St George's School for Girls

Garscube Terrace, Edinburgh EH12 6BG ●
Website st-georges.edin.sch.uk
Head Anne Everest, BA, since 2010; formerly head of St Margaret's School for Girls, Aberdeen **Pupils** 450 girls: 406 day, 44 boarding **Faith** Non-denom **Ages** 13–18 **Term fees** Day: £4,215; boarding: £8,810 **Oxbridge** 3 places **Registration** By January of year before entry; £75 fee **Admission** School's own exam, interview and previous school's report **Alumnae** Lady Mary Ogilvie, Marie Stopes, sculptor Kathleen Scott
Prep: **Head** Sue Hay **Pupils** 390 girls, day and boarding **Ages** 2–13 **Term fees** Day: £3,770; boarding: £8,365

St George's is very much a local Edinburgh school but it has a brilliant international outlook. The exchange programme is tremendous: pupils are whisked off to the US, Australia, Chile and South Africa; and there are online digital exchanges with schools in Bangalore, Texas and Philadelphia. At home, girls learn about Chinese language and culture in the dedicated 'Confucius' classroom, and everyone loves the Model United Nations club. Head Anne Everest wants to equip pupils with everything they might need in life – a mother says St George's is excellent at 'empowering girls to believe in themselves'. The school's magazine, *Independent Women*, says it all. Girls can start off at age two in the nursery and carry on through to 18, which many do. Academically, St George's has the best Advanced Higher results in Scotland – 88 per cent A–B last year; they also scored 72 per cent A*–B at A-level. Pupils won Scottish Schools medals for athletics, netball, cycling, fencing and swimming in 2014, and the new athletics track is open for business; a new pavilion is up next. This really is a day school with a bit of boarding, but the accommodation is lovely: Buccleuch is the favourite house at the moment – the girls adore the fuchsia bathrooms.

DID YOU KNOW?

The new head of Queen Margaret's, Jessica Miles, says her most treasured possession is a signed photograph of her golfing hero Seve Ballesteros

St Leonards School

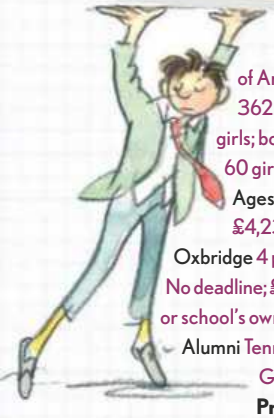
St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9QJ ● ●
Website stleonards-fife.org
Head Dr Michael Carslaw, PhD, since 2008; previously deputy head


Queen Margaret's

● BOYS ● GIRLS ● ● MIXED



St Leonards School



of Ardingly College Pupils 362. Day: 119 boys, 113 girls; boarding: 70 boys, 60 girls Faith Non-denom Ages 12–18 Term fees Day: £4,231; boarding: £10,319 Oxbridge 4 places Registration No deadline; £100 fee Admission CE or school's own exam and interview Alumni Tennis player Kitty Godfree, Stella Tennant

Prep: Head Andrew Donald Pupils 151 day: 71 boys, 80 girls Ages 5–12 Fees £3,473

Not only do boys and girls get to flit between medieval buildings on one of the most impressive campuses in Scotland, but they get to play golf on St Andrew's Old Course too. The game is big here – unsurprising, given the stupendous location and that golf's on the curriculum from age five. St Leonards was one of the first schools in Scotland to introduce the IB and they've fully embraced it (an average of 34 points last year). There is an international flavour: pupils hail from 30 different countries; 20 per cent leave for university abroad and the DELF (Diplômes d'Etudes en Langue Française) is now on offer but the school stays true to its strong Scottish roots with its own tartan, ceilidhs aplenty and piping each evening. Head Michael Carslaw describes St Leonards as a 'school of balance', with many dogs on hand, notably his Hungarian vizsla Otto, the economics spaniel Lucky, and Bryn, the marketing department's labradoodle. You can bring your pony as well as your golf clubs: there's a local livery and an equestrian programme. Sport moves down to the beach when the pitches freeze; a new sports hall is planned now the kitchens have had a refit. And the end of the autumn term is a real highlight, when multilingual concerts, recitals and services send everyone off on a high for Christmas. For the record, the homely boarding houses are reassuringly warm.

St Peter's School

Clifton, York YO30 6AB

Website stpetersyork.org.uk Head Leo Winkley, MA, since 2010; previously managing head at Bedales Pupils 548. Day: 234 boys, 172 girls; boarding: 75 boys, 67 girls Faith C of E Ages 13–18 Term fees Day: £5,520; boarding: £9,125 Oxbridge 8 places Registration A year before entry advised; £75 fee Admission School's own exam and interview Alumni John Barry, Guy Fawkes, Greg Wise

Prep: Head Andy Falconer Pupils 341 day and boarding: 203 boys, 138 girls Ages 3–13 Term fees Day: £4,565; boarding: £7,765

It's pretty cool to be a boarder in the bustling centre of ancient York, as Guy Fawkes must have discovered. 'Brown is good' is the saying in these parts, starting with the uniform and extending to all things Peter's-related. We like head Leo Winkley's description of his pupils: 'Purposeful participators, ambitious but not sharp-elbowed.' And we like their description of him too. 'He's very entertaining,' one tells us. 'He knows everyone's name and will always say hello to you in the corridors.' Pupils love the 'great, very supportive' teachers (especially the head of history, Mr Trevett) and the variety of sports on offer. Peter's isn't the rugby-dominated place it once was: the rowing is outstanding and planning is well under way for a new boathouse. A pupil excelled in the England cross-country championships; another is juggling GCSEs with playing professional football for Leeds United and the England U17s. The school achieved 54.3 per cent A*–A grades at A-level last year, and its value-added scores are exceptional. St Peter's is hugely popular, as is its prep St Olave's, but 'we're as big as we want to be,' says Mr Winkley. 'Big enough for diversity but with no room for cliques.' A recent pupil survey revealed that the number-one gripe was shower pressure in the boarding houses – duly fixed. We take it as an excellent sign that they didn't have anything more significant to moan about.



Sedbergh

Sedbergh, Cumbria LA10 5HG

Website sedberghschool.org Head Andrew Fleck, MA, since 2010; previously head of Ashville College, Harrogate Pupils 494. Day: 6 boys, 12 girls; boarding: 293 boys, 183 girls Faith C of E Ages 13–18 Term fees Day: £7,650; boarding: £10,382 Oxbridge 2 places Registration Early registration advised; £125 fee Admission CE or school's own exam, interview and previous school's report Alumni Rugby players Will Carling and Will Greenwood, pianist Roger Vignoles

Prep: Head Scott Carnochan Pupils 200 day and boarding: 105 boys, 95 girls Ages 3–13 Term fees Day: £4,860; boarding: £7,336

You want your child to have a Great British full-boarding education? They'll get it at Sedbergh, along with lungfuls of good Yorkshire Dales air. The school has never been more popular: the roll is heading towards 500, and head Andrew Fleck is aiming for 520. In prospective pupils, Mr Fleck is looking for 'talented academics who will play music, walk in the hills and take to the pitch... rugby



players who will sing and study... and so it goes on.' Sedbergh's name is synonymous with sporting glory – more than 400 pupils have represented their country since 2000, last year in rugby, cricket and hockey (of course), but also in target-shooting and sailing. The musicians are fast catching up: 'Instrumentalists are now of sufficient standard to play post Grade-8 ensemble pieces, such as Brahms's Piano Quintet,' Mr Fleck reports. Last year's A-level grades were 54 per cent A*–B; two pupils won Oxbridge places; and they've appointed a member of staff to advise on US university entry because of students' increasing interest. The merger with Casterton is complete (it was the all-girls school down the road; it's now Sedbergh's prep), as is the new girls' house (Carus, named after Casterton's founder Carus Wilson), with its £1.4m dining and recreation centre. Thanks to the rock-solid house system, pupils here are well-grounded and confident. In Mr Fleck's words, 'Sedbergh is a school that radiates optimism and embraces those who do likewise.'

Strathallan

Forgandenny, Perthshire PH2 9EG ●●

Website strathallan.co.uk
Head Bruce Thompson, MA, since 2000; previously deputy head at Dollar Academy **Pupils** 566. Day: 127 boys, 86 girls; boarding: 194 boys, 159 girls **Faith** Non-denom **Ages** 9–18 **Term fees** Day: £6,833; boarding: £10,070 **Oxbridge** Occasional **Registration** Early registration advised; £95 fee **Admission** CE or school's own exam and previous school's report **Alumni** Historian Tessa Dunlop, Colin Montgomerie

Last year, Strathallan decided to introduce girls' football and ended up becoming the second-best school in Scotland. That's kind of the way they do things at this bustling Perthshire co-ed, which has 46 Scottish, British or European winning teams or individuals across 12 different sports, including rugby, hockey, canoeing, tennis and equestrianism. It helps that the facilities are out of this world: there's a purpose-built canoe slalom course, for example, and a clay-pigeon-shooting centre. Strath's winning mentality extends to the classroom: last year, pupils brought home a treasure trove of Maths Challenge medals (20 golds) and LAMDA distinctions (53 in total). They managed to fit in their A-levels too, which hit a solid 77 per cent A*–B. Sport may be Strath's ace but we'd like to point out that the choir is very strong and pupils sing in the National Youth Choir and Scottish Opera Connect. Head Bruce Thompson – 'good-humoured and informative', says a mother – describes the diverse, multitalented school as 'a vibrant community'. Day and boarding pupils are well integrated: day pupils are allocated to a boarding house and stay late to do activities like beekeeping or chess. Glenbrae, the new girls' house, has underfloor heating and its own resident black Labrador. The school's taxidermy bear is the only member of school who sits still – he's been nailed to the floor because of too much roving around the campus.

Withington Girls' School

Wellington Road, Fallowfield, Manchester M14 6BL ●

Website wgs.org
Head Sue Marks, MA, since 2010; previously head of Tormead School, Guildford **Pupils** 551 day girls **Faith** Non-denom **Ages** 11–18 **Term fees** £4,006 **Oxbridge** 12 places **Registration** Early registration advised but no deadline; £50 fee **Admission** School's own exam and interview **Alumnae** Sarah Burton, opera singer Christine Rice
Prep: **Head** Kathryn Burrows **Pupils** 132 day girls **Ages** 7–11 **Term fees** £3,036

Founded 125 years ago by men who wanted their daughters to receive the same stellar education that their sons were getting at Manchester Grammar, Withington Girls' ticks the academic box – and many more besides. Funds are micromanaged to keep fees low while academic results soar: 96 per cent A*–B at A-level last year; 12 Oxbridge offers. Some facilities (including a bus service) are shared with MGS too. Head Sue Marks, a firm believer in all-girls education, is impressive, energetic and sets a great example. Her study is littered with photographs of old girls and mementoes of her own academic and sporting past (one of the first women at Jesus College, Oxford) to inspire her wards. Entrance is selective and there are three or four applicants for every place. The junior school is fab and has a new building, but sadly there's no automatic entry to the next level. There's no rule book other than to 'treat others as you would like to be treated', no detention system, a culture of respect and no prizes awarded as 'the pleasure of academic work should be its own reward', according to Mrs Marks. That didn't stop girls conquering all in the British Physics Olympiad, two Oxford colleges' essay competitions and the Model United Nations last year. Pupils compete at county and international level in sport and are passionate about fundraising and community support. Famously, the school nurse's lavender oil will cure everything.



Withington Girls' School

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Tutor, Winchester College, Oxford University

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Maria L, mother

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Madelena
DRESS, £91, BY
STELLA McCARTNEY.
CANVAS SHOES,
£33, BY
PAPOUELLI

Photographed by PIOTR MOTYKA

Hello sweetie

Pick 'n' mix fashion for bright young things

Styled by SOPHIE GOODWIN

This page

Florence
SILK DRESS, £975, BY **FENDI**. LEATHER SHOES, £69, BY **PAPOUELLI**. HAIRBAND, PROP STYLIST'S OWN

Dulcie
SILK-COTTON DRESS, £598, BY **ROBERTO CAVALLI JUNIOR**. LEATHER SHOES, £30, BY **MINI BODEN.** HAIRBAND, PROP STYLIST'S OWN

Opposite page

Florence
SILK DRESS, £225, BY **BURBERRY**. HAIRBAND, £19, BY **ILOVEGORGEOUS**

Miles
COTTON SHIRT, £125, BY **DOLCE & GABBANA**. VELVET SUIT, £495, BY **ARMANI JUNIOR**







From left to right

Florence
SATIN PLAYSUIT, £65, BY **ILOVEGORGEOUS**. FAUX-FUR CAT-EAR HAIRBAND, £17.95, BY **NOE & ZOE**, AT **HARRODS**. LEATHER SHOES, £139, BY **SIMONETTA**

Madelena
GEORGETTE DRESS, £65, BY **ILOVEGORGEOUS**. SILK HAIRBAND, £215, BY **DOLCE & GABBANA**, AT **HARRODS**. LEATHER SHOES, £65, BY **PAPOUELLI**

Miles
DENIM SHIRT, £71, BY **DIESEL**. COTTON SHORTS, £130, BY **DOLCE & GABBANA**. SUEDE TRAINERS, £69, BY **PAPOUELLI**

Dulcie
SEQUIN DRESS, £125; SEQUIN HAIRBAND, £19, BOTH BY **ILOVEGORGEOUS**. SEQUIN SHOES, £30, BY **MINI BODEN**

Percy
COTTON SHIRT, £125; COTTON-CORDUROY SHORTS, £125, BOTH BY **DOLCE & GABBANA**. WOOL JUMPER, £70, BY **POLO RALPH LAUREN**. LEATHER TRAINERS, £79, BY **STEP2WO**




Anti-submarine experts see opportunities surfacing



This page

Dulcie

LAMÉ DRESS, £330, BY **MISSONI**. LEATHER SHOES, £30, BY **MINI BODEN**

Opposite page

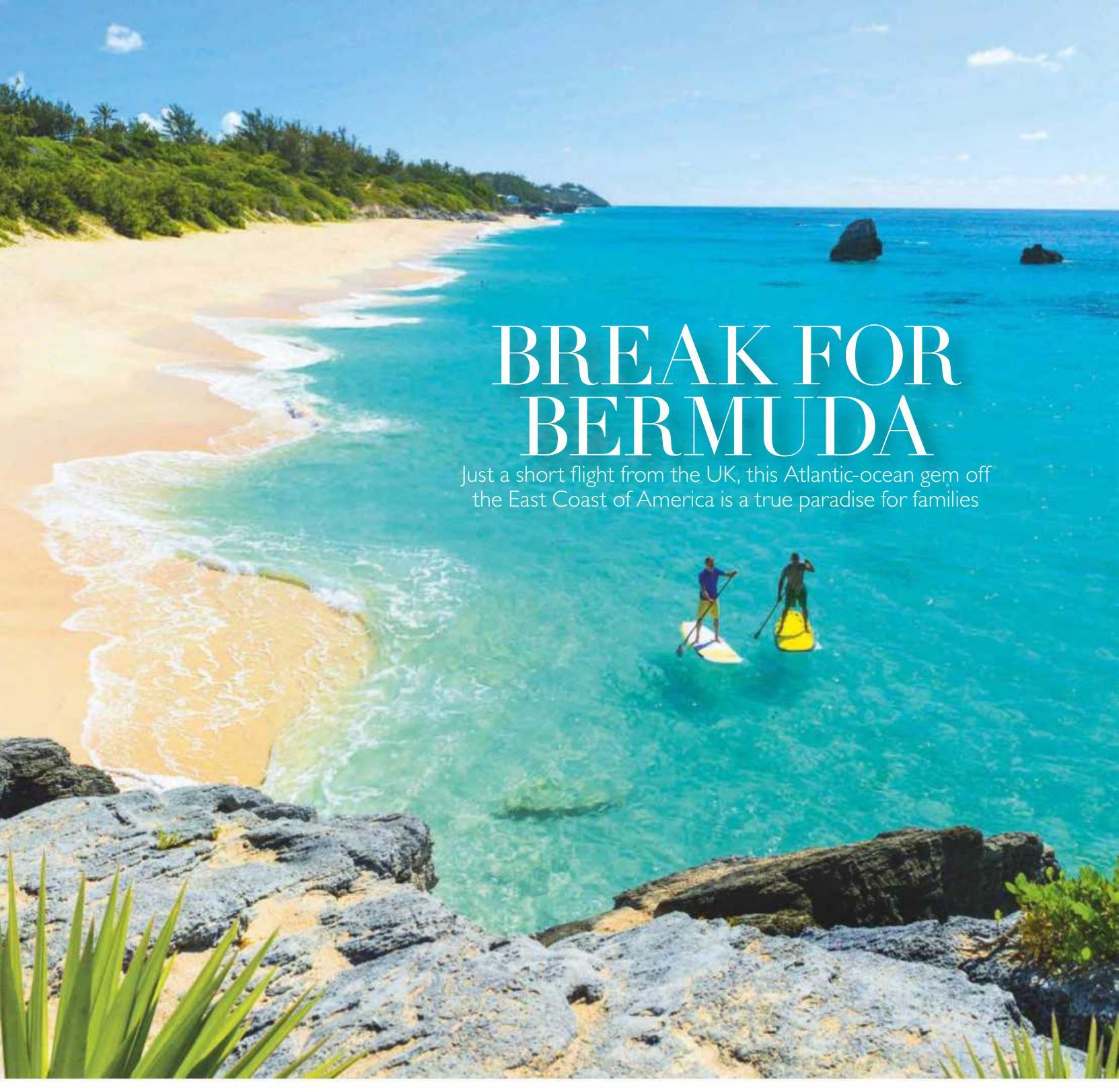
Miles

COTTON SHIRT, £68, BY **BOSS**. COTTON SWEATER VEST, £135, BY **DOLCE & GABBANA**. DENIM JEANS, £35, BY **TOMMY HILFIGER**. SUEDE TRAINERS, £69, BY **PAPOUELLI**

Percy

COTTON SHIRT, £65, BY **MARIE-CHANTAL**. COTTON SWEATER VEST, £155, BY **DOLCE & GABBANA**. DENIM JEANS, £65, BY **POLO RALPH LAUREN**. LEATHER TRAINERS, £79, BY **STEP2WO**

FOR STOCKISTS, SEE ADDRESS BOOK IN MAIN MAGAZINE. HAIR & MAKE-UP BY CHRISTINA CORWAY, USING AESOP AND BUMBLE AND BUMBLE. MODELS, FLORENCE BAILEY AT ALPHABET KIDZ, MADALENA PEREIRA & DULCIE NOBREGA AT BRUCE AND BROWN, PERCY SHEPPARD AND MILES KOE AT KIDS LONDON. PROP STYLIST, ALEXANDRA LEAVEY AT SOHO MANAGEMENT. PRODUCTION, ELLE KORHALILLER. FASHION ASSISTANT. POM OGILVY



BREAK FOR BERMUDA

Just a short flight from the UK, this Atlantic-ocean gem off the East Coast of America is a true paradise for families

Imagine a place that feels both familiar and tropical. Where red telephone boxes can be found on palm-tree lined roads and afternoon tea is a part of the daily routine. As one of the oldest British colonies, Bermuda has a very British feel, yes, but also an island paradise soul. Do a double take as you spot British policemen clad in Bermuda shorts. You're never too far from the sound of the ocean and the cuisine is a mouth-watering fusion of flavours. This is a happy place – buildings are painted in pretty pastel shades and the Bermudan welcome is renowned the world over. In fact, one particularly friendly 91-year-old local, Johnny Barnes, (dubbed Mr Happy) devotes hours of his day to simply wishing luck and love to people. We've taken a look at a selection of the family-friendly activities on offer. Put yourself on island time...

ON YOUR BIKE

Explore Bermuda by bike and fully immerse yourself in the humming, buzzing tropical surroundings. Hedgerows overflow with fragrant bougainvillea and the air is tangy with sea salt. With a total area of just 21 square miles, traversing the whole island by bike is possible. The Old Railway Trail, which runs the length of Bermuda, has been converted into an accessible route to quaint colourful towns, intimate coves and historic sites. Take the trip to Spittal Pond Nature Reserve – children will get a real kick out of all the bats, butterflies and rare lizards. Or why not cycle to the island's highest point? You'll find Gibb's Hill Lighthouse here, which dates back to 1844 and is open to the public. Take an organised bike tour or pedal off on your own adventure.

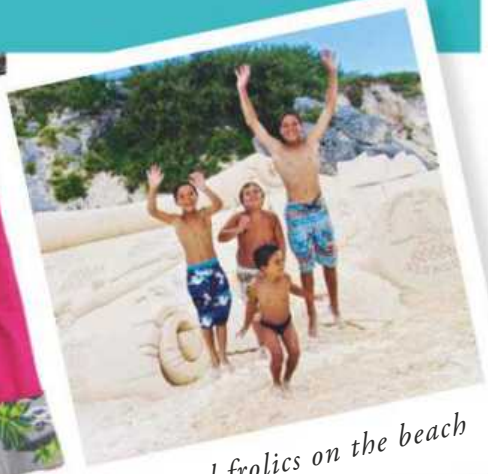


PARENTS ESCAPE

Bermuda is into golf, in a big way. The island boasts a multitude of top-quality courses. If you're seeking a little break from the kids, and a few hours peace on a course, we can think of nowhere better. The Mid Ocean Club, reputed to be one of Bermuda's best, features rolling greens, private beaches and a clubhouse not unlike a James Bond lair. When you've exhausted the 18-hole course, the Club can also arrange fishing and scuba expeditions and tennis lessons. Oh, and the restaurant is pretty good too.



BERMUDA SHORTS, BY **TABS** **TABSBERMUDA.COM**



Fun and frolics on the beach

MAKE A SPLASH

Bermuda is famed for its pink beaches. Stretches of this soft sand lead to waters of the most startlingly vivid blue and turquoise. Horseshoe Bay, with its stunning rock formations, is one of Bermuda's prettiest coves. Take a picnic here and enjoy swimming in the crystal-clear sea. There's plenty of watersports to try on the island – from snorkelling, sailing and jet skiing to the more unusual hydro biking (cycling on water). With all the buzz surrounding the upcoming Louis Vuitton America's Cup World Series sailing regatta in October (15-18) 2015 and the finale in June 2017, there has never been a better time to take to the seas. Do you dream of seeing whales in the wild? In March and April, humpbacks pass Bermuda's shores on their annual northern migration. On a boat, you'll have a front row seat at one of nature's most impressive spectacles – an experience your kids will never forget! As the shipwreck dive capital of the world, Bermuda has over 300 wrecks scattered around its coast teeming with marine life and begging to be explored. These make for an exciting dive expedition. Some wrecks peek above the water and can be reached from the shore or visited by boat – perfect for little pirate fans to snorkel.

CULTURE AND CUISINE

Exhausted from all the outdoorsy fun? Opt for a slower pace with a visit to the Bermuda Underwater Exploration Institute. Here, you can learn about the island's volcanic origins, sea life and shipwreck legacy. Children will love the interactive science museum and the extensive shell exhibit is a sight to behold. The island is also home to an aquarium, a zoo and the breathtaking forts in St Catherine. Unsurprisingly, seafood plays a central role in Bermudan cuisine. Want to catch your own fish? Try a Catch and Cook BBQ with a local and truly earn your dinner!

PACK YOUR BAGS...

Thanks to its position in the Gulf Stream, Bermuda enjoys a mild year-round climate, making it the perfect destination throughout the year. The island is noted for its gentle breeze, making even high temperatures pleasant. Best of all, Bermuda is only a seven-hour direct flight from the UK. What are you waiting for?

For information, visit gotobermuda.co.uk
To book, visit carrier.co.uk



PREP SCHOOLS

LONDON


Broomwood Hall

Arnold House

1 Loudoun Road, NW8 0LH ●
Website arnoldhouse.co.uk
Head Vivian Thomas Pupils 250 day boys
Faith C of E Ages 5–13 Term fees £5,735

Old boys stay loyal to this small North London prep; the '42 Club hosts several shindigs a year to reminisce about their days in cherry-red blazers. You must register your son between his first and second birthdays; head Vivian Thomas is after 'normal boys'. Our spy raved about the wonderfully funny tour guides during her visit. The school has an 'activity centre' near Edgware, where the boys practise their tournament-winning rugby and football; they also won the London Schools U11 gymnastics last year. Debating is top notch (Haileybury debating competition champs); music is sublime and leavers head off to City of London and Westminster; a small gang to board at Eton and Radley.

Broomwood Hall

68–74 Nightingale Lane, SW12 8NR ●
Website broomwood.co.uk
Head Carole Jenkinson Pupils 453 day girls (232 boys in pre-prep) Faith C of E Ages 4–16 Term fees £5,810

This is a traditional, spruce school where wellbeing is as important as the academics. We are 'pastorally kind,' says head Carole Jenkinson. Most pupils come from the co-ed pre-prep, everyone else should form an orderly queue. FYI, they want parents who are the right fit. Girls get stuck into everything from football to Leiths. Music is splendid, ditto the drama. Winning places at senior schools has always been a breeze, but girls can now stay at Broomwood until 16. A quarter leave for JAGS, Alleyn's and co at 11; others hotfoot it to Bryanston and Heathfield at 13. We hear that senior schools love a Broomwood girl, and at one point alumnae were head girls at three top boarding schools simultaneously.

Bute House

Luxemburg Gardens, W6 7EA ●
Website butehouse.co.uk
Head Helen Lowe Pupils 311 day girls
Faith Non-denom Ages 4–11
Term fees £4,654

We like the spring in Bute House's step, the beaming girls, the immaculate staff who could have been picked by central casting. Head Helen Lowe is positivity personified – she hands out reward stickers saying 'Mrs Lowe says you are a star'. The non-competitive ethos (no streaming, no exams till 11-plus) means that 'every girl runs her own best race'. The scholarship list shows no fewer than 35 awards to all the best London day schools plus Benenden, Wycombe and Uppingham. Lots of drama and music; masses of sport (they're mustard at netball and swimming). Get your daughter down for the reception ballot quick smart; for 7+ entry, there's an assessment day and interview – 'It comes down to personality, not test scores,' says Mrs Lowe. 'We know the kind of child that will fit in.'

Colet Court

Lonsdale Road, SW13 9JT ●
Website coletcourt.org.uk
Head Tim Meunier
Pupils 439 day boys
Faith C of E Ages 7–13
Term fees £6,034

These may well be the cleverest boys in the capital, on track for St Paul's (20 SPS scholarships last year, as well as two to Westminster and one apiece to Eton and Marlborough), but they wear it lightly. In one classroom we spied boys learning a ceilidh dance; in the art room, the jolliest painting session; in the library, well-thumbed copies of the *Beano* alongside *Time*. They zip around the 45 acres and won the IAPS national swimming championships last year. Register from age four for the 36 places at 7+ and 8+ (they take another 20 at 11+); there are roughly six applicants per place and more than a quarter come from state primaries. 'Opportunity and scholarship within a relaxed, happy and refreshingly "ordinary" atmosphere,' says head Tim Meunier.

Dulwich Prep London

42 Alleyn Park, SE21 7AA ●
Website dulwichpreplondon.org
Head Michael Roulston Pupils 838 boys, day and weekly boarding
Faith C of E Ages 3–13 Term fees Day: £5,615 (boarding: £160 extra a week)

'Happy children who love life' is what head Michael Roulston is after for his stonking South London prep. It's buzzing with activity, and sport is huge: the swimming team are ranked nationally and footballers nip off to play Paris St Germain academy teams in France. Over 300 music exams were taken last year, 50 per cent passed with distinction, and 20 pieces of art were selected for the Young Art Exhibition at the RCA. The academic record is excellent but last year was the best yet: 57 scholarships and awards to both London's top day schools and the south-east's boarding giants. There are new science labs and cookery suites, plus a beehive on the roof *à la* Fortnum & Mason.



● BOYS ● GIRLS ● ● MIXED

Eaton House The Manor Schools

58 Clapham Common Northside, SW4 9RU

Website eatonhouseschools.com Head Jeremy Edwards (boys), Sarah Segrave (girls) Pupils 615 day: 440 boys, 175 girls Faith C of E Ages 4–13 (boys), 4–11 (girls) Term fees £5,808 (boys); £4,748 (girls)

At Eaton House The Manor Boys' School, head Jeremy Edwards wants his pupils to be 'good citizens and hardworking, to be inquisitive and enjoy learning'. And we think he can pat himself on the back as they toddle off to the likes of Eton and Westminster, having played in unbeaten football teams (two years) and exhibited at the Royal College of Art. Boys also get a dose of the real world – survival skills in the Lake District and financial planning. To get in you should really aim for the pre-prep – almost all continue on to the prep automatically, leaving only 10 places up for grabs at 8+. On the same site, Eaton House The Manor Girls' is no longer a pitstop to park sisters and is being guided with great success by head Sarah Segrave. Like Mr Edwards, she considers good teachers key, and mentors NQTs herself. There is two-form entry in the girls' school for the first time this year; pupils leave for Wycombe, St Swithun's, Francis Holland SW1 and Woldingham. Hockey teams posted sterling results recently but there's also lots of ballet and swimming. There isn't much overlap between the boys and the girls – it's a case of bumping into each other. Both schools benefit from having Clapham Common on the doorstep and a swish new theatre – a revamp of the dining room is next on the wishlist.

Eaton Square School

79 Eccleston Square, SW1V 1PP

Website eatonsquareschool.com Head Sebastian Hepher Pupils 530 day: 258 boys, 272 girls Faith Non-denom Ages 2 ½–13 Term fees £6,595

This is a school that goes to great lengths – and not just in the swimming pool, where they are unbeaten for the fifth year running. Head Sebastian Hepher describes Eaton Square as a 'hard-working and hard-playing' place. So jetsetting to France and Italy for residential courses, performing at the Unicorn Theatre or dominating on the ski slopes are par for the course, as is winning places to Downe House, King's Wimbledon, Sevenoaks and Highgate. Admission is non-selective as Mr Hepher doesn't believe in formally assessing children at such a young age: an insider says, 'he gets the right balance between academic readiness and life lessons.' Pupils we met raved about their teachers too. In such an international city, Eaton Square remains very British; pupils have impeccable manners and there is a nicely scruffy vibe inside.



Bute House



Eaton Square School



L'Ecole de Battersea

Trott Street, SW11 3DS

Website lecoledespetits.co.uk Head Frédérique Brisset Pupils 254 day: 126 boys, 128 girls Faith Non-denom Ages 3–11 Term fees £3,715

It's L'Ecole de Battersea's 10th birthday and this unique school is as popular as ever – more than 600 applicants missed out on a place last year. (Entrance is by order of registration, so get on it.) The school's motto is 'Where there is no vision the people shall perish' and founders Mme and M. Otten's vision of a bilingual school has created the ultimate educational Entente Cordiale. They follow the French curriculum (the school is *homologué*, which means it's recognised by France's Department of Education) with the best bits of British schooling mixed in (not the food or uniform, obviously, but think discovery trips to Dorset). The fencing and drama are tremendous and the new pupil-led school council is being very vocal. Leavers are just as likely to head for King's Wimbledon and Putney High as the French Lycee.

Falkner House

19 Brechin Place, SW7 4GB

Website falknerhouse.co.uk Head Anita Griggs Pupils 190 day girls (10 boys in pre-prep) Faith C of E Ages 3–11 Term fees £5,650

Dear Mrs Griggs, please, pretty please, will you open a boys' school? We love everything about Falkner House: how many other schools insist that every child learns a poem a week? Or take over an entire cinema for a whole-school trip to *Paddington*? Or (less thrilling but possibly more important) send their alumnae to St Paul's Girls, Latymer, CLSG and St Mary's Ascot, around half with scholarships? It feels like a family home, and one teacher described his style as 'chalk and talk', but there's plenty of tech too: FH has been selected by Apple as a pioneer in the use of iPads in education. Girls are assessed for reception places (get your name down early because the list is limited), and there's no automatic transfer from nursery to reception. Mrs Griggs is emphatically anti-tutoring and is looking for focus and enthusiasm – 'Determination coupled with politeness never goes amiss!' says the school.

Garden House School

Turks Row, SW3 4TW

Website gardenhouseschool.co.uk Head Charlotte Crofton (upper girls), Julia Adlard (lower girls), Christian Warland (boys) Pupils 510 day: 218 boys, 292 girls Faith Non-denom Ages 3–11 Term fees £7,100

Hard to think of anything sweeter than Garden House girls dancing *The Nutcracker* with the English National Ballet – 'unforgettable', says an insider. The arts are flourishing here: a carnival-themed

ILLUSTRATIONS: BOB WILSON/PHOSPHOR ART. BACKGROUND: SHUTTERSTOCK


Hornsby House

concert at Cadogan Hall, *Macbeth* at St James's Theatre, and not forgetting Garden House Has Talent (which it certainly does). The U10 swimming girls are the fastest team in the country – particularly remarkable because GH doesn't have a pool. 'The Kindness Code is at the heart of what we do,' says the school. It's a gentle, unpressurised place, where boys and girls are taught separately but get together for meals and clubs. Girls go on to Wycombe, St Paul's et al, boys to all the best London and country preps. 'Yes, put down names at birth,' is the advice; there are 10 applicants for each place.

Glendower Prep School

86/87 Queen's Gate, SW7 5JX ●

Website glendowerprep.org
Head Sarah Knollys **Pupils** 230 day girls **Faith** Non-denom **Ages** 4–11
Term fees £5,665

'Clearly extremely talented young ladies', says an observer. We'll second that. Glendower is famous for its South Ken stucco, grey-and-purple uniform and its super results: 15 scholarships to St Paul's, NLCS and Wycombe last year; IAPS swimming medals galore too. However, 'the jewel in the crown', says a parent, is headmistress Sarah Knollys. We hear Mrs Knollys has made the school community more inclusive and is teaching parents not to tutor, not to push and how to behave pitch-side. Bravo. We also like the sound of the new house system, with each one linked to a local charity. The aim is a broad education – bridge club and current affairs sit alongside French, which is excellent – with small class sizes and specialist teachers. It's heavily oversubscribed and girls are assessed in groups for entrance in reception.

The Hall School

23 Crossfield Road, NW3 4NU ●

Website hallschool.co.uk
Head Christopher Godwin **Pupils** 460 day boys **Faith** C of E **Ages** 4–13
Term fees £5,809

This North London superstar celebrated its 125th anniversary this year with recitals, concerts and receptions, culminating in a summer ball at the Tower of London. Entrance is selective, there are 300 applicants for 54 places; and you must register before your son's first birthday, or you're out. Exits are stellar: scholarships to Westminster, City of London, Dulwich and Harrow last year. The U13 hockey and 1st rugby teams were unbeaten for the second season running and boys dominate regional general knowledge and chess competitions. You'd be forgiven for thinking the Hall is a pressure-cooker but head Chris Godwin and his wife Sue ensure that the whole boy is cared for. Our spy noted, 'an impressive awareness of study and life skills', and top banter – we'd expect nothing less.

Hill House

17 Hans Place, SW1X 0EP ● ●

Website hillhouseschool.co.uk
Head Richard Townend **Pupils** 960 day: 500 boys, 460 girls **Faith** C of E
Ages 4–13 **Term fees** £4,850

A top senior-school head praises Hill House alumni. 'It's a bit bonkers,' he says, 'but we like bonkers.' How's this for an admissions policy? 'Turn up at 8.30am any morning during term time, take a tour. If you like what you see and there is a space and we like you, you're in.' Head Richard Townend describes this as an 'English school, with English culture and an English curriculum.' Pupils get an academically rigorous education, lots of music (nine choirs), trips galore (a school chalet in Switzerland) and, of course, that swede-and-russet uniform. They head on to a huge range of schools; 16 scholarships last year, including two Eton music awards. Yes, the Ofsted report wasn't great, but – while we acknowledge the importance of those twin gods, Health and Safety – we suggest you take it with a pinch of salt. Visit and draw your own conclusions.



Hornsby House

Hearnville Road, SW12 8RS ● ●

Website hornsbyhouse.org.uk
Head Edward Rees **Pupils** 416 day: 208 boys, 208 girls **Faith** Non-denom
Ages 4–11 **Term fees** £4,605

'Non-selective co-education at its best', declares an insider. There's just one catch – your little darlings must be registered at birth and places are scarce. 'We need another school to keep up with the demand,' says head Edward Rees. Home is residential Wandsworth; classrooms are bright, airy and decked out with the latest touchscreen TVs. We are fans of the Hornsby House certificate, which prepares Year 6 for big school with leadership skills and teamwork – good stuff. The school was awarded an Artsmark Gold by the Arts Council last year; two girls were selected to train with the U11 Surrey cricket squad and the choir performed at the O2 and – more importantly – Peter Jones. Pupils move on to South London's big hitters: Dulwich, Alleyn's and JAGS.



Kensington Prep School

596 Fulham Road, SW6 5PA ●

Website kensingtonprep.gdst.net
Head Prudence Lynch **Pupils** 299 day girls **Faith** Non-denom **Ages** 4–11
Term fees £5,071

This plucky Parsons Green prep is on a winning streak: girls shone at the

GDST Junior General Knowledge Quiz, won the inter-school Science and Engineering Award Challenge and took home the Lords Cricket Mason Cup last year. Ken Prep's space and facilities are marvellous for a London school – even so, a £2.7m 'enhancement' is planned and Year 2 already have a glossy new play area. Entrance is selective and these clever girls are destined for the big guns, winning scholarships to Wycombe Abbey, Latymer and South Hampstead High. Debating and coding club are new and almost all are part of a choir or a musical ensemble. As one mother noted, it's the 'crème de la crème for daughters who can cruise in the fast lane'.

Knightsbridge School

67 Pont Street, SW1X 0BD

Website knightsbridgeschool.com
Head Magoo Giles Pupils 390 day: 205 boys, 185 girls Faith Non-denom
Ages 3–13 Term fees £6,330

The parents might be an international crowd, but the education at Knightsbridge is the best of British – impeccable manners, immaculate uniform, shiny shoes (head Magoo Giles has a thing about shoe-polishing – you can take the man out of the Guards regiment...). KS is a tremendously happy school – 'Disneyland!' said an insider – where the mantra is Keep Smiling (sounds cheesy; in reality, isn't). Breaktime play is in the church hall across the road; they're proud of the new edible garden in the church grounds, of the seven-days-a-week clubs timetable and of their Education Foundation, which gives bursaries to local children. Parents have to be prepared to Get Involved: there's a mums' netball team and a dads' football squad. Well, as Magoo chants to his pupils, 'You've got to be in it to win it.'

Newton Prep School

149 Battersea Park Road, SW8 4BX

Website newtonprepschool.co.uk
Head Alison Fleming Pupils 621 day: 344 boys, 277 girls Faith Non-denom
Ages 3–13 Term fees £5,875

An impressive double-height sports hall, two gyms, a recital hall, dance studios, auditorium, all-weather pitches – other London prep heads are weeping. And that's before you get to Newton Prep's scholarship results, 35 last year. Some leave at 11+ to Alleyn's, St Paul's and the GDST schools, the rest at 13+ to board. The place is right beside the Nine Elms development in Battersea, so parents come from both north and south of the river. Entrance is by assessment. We are big fans of head Alison Fleming, who talks such good sense. She says there is 'kind heart to the school' and that the pupil-and-parent body is diverse but tight knit. Newton Prep are U11 IAPS fencing champs (the sport in general is fab). Rugby is new, as is the D of E-style Newton Diploma and they've reinstated the annual carol service for the first time in a decade.

Norland Place School

162–166 Holland Park Avenue, W11 4UH

Website norlandplace.com
Head Patrick Mattar Pupils 246 day: 90 boys, 156 girls Faith Inter-denom
Ages 4–11 Term fees £5,463

A Norland mother praises its 'relaxed feel and focus on nice manners and consideration.' Register at birth to be in with a chance of one of the four definite places up for grabs each month ('we decline attempts at foetus registration,' says head Patrick Mattar – he's not joking). If you're on the waiting list, polite harassment doesn't hurt. Boys head off at eight to Colet Court, Westminster Under, Sussex House; Godolphin & Latymer is the girls' destination of choice at 11+. 'Huge successes' in music exams, drama lessons for all, new coding and programming classes too. Pupils turn out for morning cross-country running club in Holland Park whatever the weather. Our spy was impressed by the cheery children, the camaraderie between years and the shelves of wellies for outings to St James's Square.

Northcote Lodge

26 Bolingbroke Grove, SW11 6EL

Website northcotelodge.co.uk
Head Mark Smith Pupils 220 day boys
Faith C of E Ages 8–13 Term fees £5,810

Mark Smith, formerly of Caldicott, has arrived to take over from retiring headmaster John Hansford. Mr Hansford has had a fabulous innings at this south-of-the-river favourite. He describes Northcote as having 'all the accoutrements of a boarding school but none of the hardship'. So think tweed jackets stuffed with conkers, a long school day with bags of extracurricular fun and homework done at school. (Parents rejoice!) Most leave at 13+ to board: to Bradfield, Brighton College and Marlborough last year. There is automatic entry from the co-ed Broomwood Hall pre-prep but all others must sit a test, where it's five wannabes per place. Indoor rowing is new, the running club has been reinstated and an insider says the drama and music departments are flourishing. These boys are confident, articulate, well-mannered – and seriously good at karate too.


Newton Prep School

Notting Hill Prep School

95 Lancaster Road, W11 1QQ

Website nottinghillprep.com
Head Jane Cameron Pupils 303 day; 156 boys, 147 girls Faith Non-denom
Ages 4–13 Term fees £5,820

Notting Hill Prep has been awarded Thinking School accreditation by the University of Exeter. Head Jane Cameron says, 'Thinking about thinking and thinking about teaching underpins all aspects of school life at NHP.' All that mindfulness – De Bono Thinking Hats in each class, P4C (Philosophy for Children) learning – helped leavers move on to Wellington, Eton, City of London and Cheltenham Ladies' last year. What's more, the girls' football team are K&C champions; one pupil won a National Gymnastics silver medal and another was Brent Music Service Junior Musician of the Year. The atmosphere is relaxed and modern – catnip to the very affluent, celeb-y families here – but Jane Cameron is warm and unshowy and, says a spy, there is 'an air of giving back'. Register at birth, then pray for a place in one of the biannual ballots. A mother says, 'Once you're in, it's a really wonderful world.'

Orchard House School

16 Newton Grove, W4 1LB

Website orchardhs.org.uk
Head Maria Edwards Pupils 291 day: 118 boys, 173 girls Faith Non-denom
Ages 3–11 Term fees £5,595

Mrs Sally Hobbs, who has been the heart and soul of Orchard House since it opened 22 years ago, 'retired' last summer (inverted commas

ILLUSTRATIONS: BOB WILSON/PHOSPHOR ART. BACKGROUND: SHUTTERSTOCK


Orchard House School

because we can't see this one-woman powerhouse putting her feet up). Her successor is Maria Edwards, from Shrewsbury High prep. OHS children 'have a spring in their step and a glint in their eye!' says the school (the latter could be down to the new financial-planning lessons – never too early...). Alumni head off to all the best day schools in west London, with academic scholarships to St Paul's and Latymer last year; a handful go on to board. Three-quarters of upper-school pupils learn an instrument, and there are five choirs. Superb swimming results, too. OHS is non-selective; places are offered by date of registration order, so get in quick.

Pembridge Hall

18 Pembridge Square, W2 4EH ●

Website pembridgehall.co.uk
Head Henry Keighley-Elstub
Pupils 414 day girls Faith C of E
Ages 4–11 Term fees £6,540

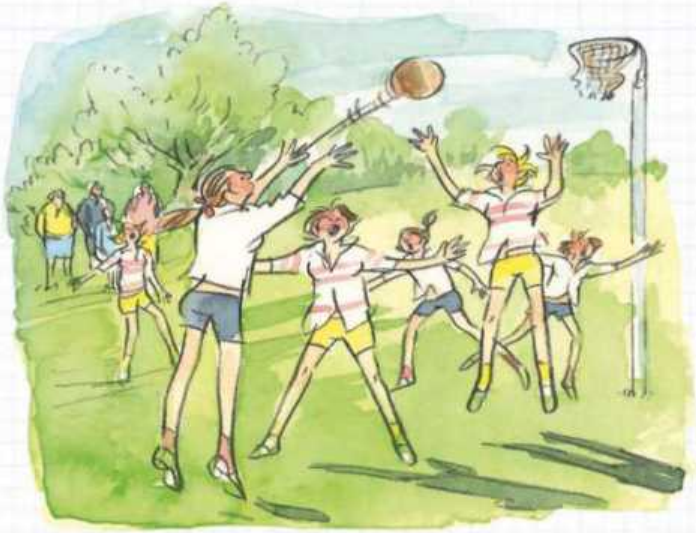
The school run at Pembridge Hall is a catwalk of designer pilates gear and clientele are very jetset, but it's a close community all the same. Last year parents enjoyed a candlelit supper accompanied by pupils' musical performances. The chamber choir toured Vicenza, Verona and Venice too. Head Henry Keighley-Elstub has been focusing on building resilience, so sport is robust; the school came second at the London School Netball tournament and won the Barn Elms cross-country competition. Register at birth; places are then allocated evenly by calendar month – the waiting list runs to over 100. It's not unknown for girls to defect to local rivals at 7+, but most stay put: leavers won scholarships to Cheltenham Ladies' and South Hampstead High last year.

Prospect House School ● ●

75 Putney Hill, SW15 3NT

Website prospecths.org.uk
Head Dianne Barratt Pupils 300 day: 147 boys, 153 girls Faith Non-denom
Ages 3–11 Term fees £5,595

'School needs to be a fun place,' asserts head Dianne Barratt, who was thrown a surprise party by staff and pupils for her 10th anniversary at Prospect House last year. This Putney prep is happy and relaxed with a purposeful atmosphere and parents are flocking; for the first time this September there will be two-form entry throughout. Register early – it's non-selective and there are 10 applicants per place. Leavers head on to everywhere from Putney High to Sherborne; eight scholarships won last year. Poetry and handwriting competitions keep traditional skills alive but they do technology very well too: coding in IT; podcasts on maths; integrated tech learning; Google Apps for French class. The pupil-led school council votes on everything from playground equipment to the colour of pens used for marking – a democracy of fun.



Ravenscourt Park Prep School

16 Ravenscourt Avenue, W6 0SL ● ●

Website rpps.co.uk
Head Carl Howes Pupils 415 day: 207 boys, 208 girls Faith Inter-denom
Ages 4–11 Term fees £5,202

Quite a coup for RPPS to land Carl Howes, deputy head of Colet Court, as its new headteacher. Academics have improved greatly under previous head Kate O'Shaughnessy, but parents are hoping Mr Howes (or 'Mr House', as he's been dubbed by one small pupil) will bring some Colet Court stardust to carry on her good work, without changing Ravenscourt's gentle, unpressurised ethos. (He tells us he's impressed by 'the friendliness of the children and the lovely sense of community', which bodes well). Pupils rave about the food and PE lessons in Ravenscourt Park. We love the sound of last year's Brechtian production of *Alice in Wonderland* – 51 children on stage for the entire performance, with no fewer than 13 Alices. Register for the ballot on your child's first birthday and hope for the best – 300 register for 60 places each year.

Redcliffe School

47 Redcliffe Gardens, SW10 9JH ● ●

Website redcliffeschool.com
Head Susan Bourne Pupils 176 day: 73 boys, 103 girls Faith Inter-denom
Ages 3–11 Term fees £4,970

At Redcliffe they applaud good humour and speedy changing after sport as much as academic prowess. Head Susan Bourne wants to inspire a sense of fun, but teaching respect is high on the list too. Our sleuth says pupils are 'smiley and chatty and showed their school with tremendous pride.' Girls win places at Downe House and Benenden, the boys move on at seven to Sussex House and Northcote Lodge. They love their swimming but there's also orchestra, ballet, yoga and tennis. Lots of trips too; the lecture on 'Exploding Custard' at the Royal Institute was a hoot. Redcliffe is pocket-sized with a family feel: many teachers have children at the school; there's a parents' choir and lots of invitations to assemblies – attendance expected, of course.

Saint Christina's School

25 St Edmund's Terrace, NW8 7PY

Website saintchristinas.org.uk
Head Paula Mortimer Pupils 234 day: 51 boys, 183 girls Faith RC Ages 3–11
Term fees £3,692

Up, up and away at Saint Christina's, where they've added a third floor to the main building and filled it with new classrooms and tip-top music facilities. It's all go, from the drama and ballet to the jaunts to Mayor's Question Time and Hampton Court. This Regent's Park darling is a Catholic school and Roman Catholic families have priority entrance. New head Paula Mortimer says, 'We believe with every fibre of our being that happy children succeed,' and charity underpins the school's ethos. Boys peel off at eight while the girls stay on then head to North London's glittering day schools. The tech side of things is being updated: new website; more tablets and a new Digital Leaders programme. They also boast the best brownies in town – and are happy to prove it in a bake-off.

St Christopher's School

32 Belsize Lane, NW3 5AE

Website st-christophers.hampstead.sch.uk
Head Susie West Pupils 245 day girls
Faith Non-denom Ages 4–11
Term fees £4,500

Head Susie West describes her school as 'open-ended and creative'. Girls racket around a smart Victorian villa in Hampstead and thrive in the eccentric (for London) environment.

DID YOU KNOW?

One to watch: Fulham Prep has been taken over by Reddam House, which is headed up by ex-Westminster supremo Dr Stephen Spurr. Expect it to start soaring

Mrs West is 'always looking for new ways to make things easier'. There's no wi-fi (which parents love); uniform is a polo shirt, tracksuit and down-jacket; and younger ones knuckle down to work to the sound of calming music. More? There's an outdoor classroom, guinea pigs, a new reading garden and an annual themed week hosted by parents. Girls do Spanish from Year 1 (not French) and love taking the 'Philosophy Teddy Bear' home for existential debate. Mrs West regards the 11+ London system as a 'horrible process'; nevertheless, all her girls sail off to the best schools in the capital and beyond.

Sussex House School

68 Cadogan Square, SW1X 0EA

Website sussexhouseschool.co.uk
Head Nicholas Kaye Pupils 184 day boys
Faith C of E Ages 8–13 Term Fees £5,830

Sussex House offers 'bespoke tailoring' – a made-to-measure education with proper, old-fashioned charm. Head Nicholas Kaye is, says a mother, 'exceptional'. A record number of boys applied last year but Mr Kaye says: 'we do not want this high number of applicants to stop boys with potential sitting the test.' The leavers' list is dominated by Eton (almost half went last year), King's Wimbledon, St Paul's, Westminster and Winchester. They take sport very seriously – team games four times a week and record numbers of medals at the British Schools Fencing Championships. A parent describes the music as the best she's heard. There's a new science lab, they've upgraded all the tech stuff and the new library is magnificent. We love the sound of *Floreat Londinium*, an ambulatory play held in 16 different locations in the City of London. '*So* Sussex House,' says an observer.



Saint Christina's School

Thomas's Battersea

28–40 Battersea High Street, SW11 3JB

Website thomas-s.co.uk
Head Ben Thomas Pupils 542 day: 285 boys, 257 girls Faith C of E Ages 4–13
Term Fees £6,110

'We are about so much more than getting children into their next school,' says head Ben Thomas. Thomas's mantra is 'be kind' and this school's focus on pupils' wellbeing is keener than ever: there's a new counsellor and new deputy head overseeing pastoral care; plus they're working with Human Ecology to track pupils' emotional responses at school. It's a balance to Thomas's high-achieving, competitive side: exits to Bryanston, Marlborough and Bradfield last year; the school is feared on central London's sporting circuit; the drama productions are impressive. Entrance at 4+ is selective, with 60 places up for grabs (they close the list at 180 registrations). Lots of Chelsea and South Ken families here, who get very stuck into the community. One father told us, 'It's a great start for sturdy little acorns.'

Thomas's Clapham

Broomwood Road, SW11 6JZ

Website thomas-s.co.uk
Head Phil Ward Pupils 649 day: 336 boys, 313 girls Faith C of E Ages 4–13
Term Fees £5,715

Phil Ward is our kind of head: he has a collection of toy fire engines, and a chocolate lab snoozing in his office. When we visited, one small pupil rushed up to hug him. There's an assessment day at 3+ for reception entry, when they're looking for 'social skills, play, willingness to have a go'. The registration list is capped, so get in early. Pupils stay until 13; 24 scholarships last year to the likes of KCS, St Paul's and Benenden. What's new, we asked? 'Masses': a curriculum review, with mindfulness classes for pupils, staff and (yikes!) parents; a woodland adventure programme on Wimbledon common; more sports fixtures. A big increase in the number of clubs, too; Mr Ward runs Airfix modelling club. As we said: our kind of head.

Thomas's Fulham

Hugon Road, SW6 3ES

Website thomas-s.co.uk
Head Annette Dobson Pupils 398 day: 209 boys, 189 girls Faith C of E
Ages 4–11 Term Fees £5,860

Port was in abundance at the fathers' inter-house rugby tournament in aid of the CAIRN Trust this year, organised by Thomas's Fulham's lively PTA. Head Annette Dobson 'loves a social occasion' herself and has guided the school impressively over the past 10 years – proof is in the scholarships won to St Mary's Calne, Whitgift and Ibstock Place last year; about a third of leavers hop on to Thomas's Clapham until 13. Children here are gregarious too, but there's a strong emphasis on manners. This year pupils attended Prince Harry's Invictus Games, went Woodland Wombling and busked outside Waitrose to raise money for Nepal. There's also lots of work with local primary schools. Parents are mostly Fulhamites, with a few French, American and Spanish families.

Thomas's Kensington

17–19 Cottesmore Gardens, W8 5PR

Website thomas-s.co.uk
Head Joanna Ebner Pupils 383 day: 191 boys, 192 girls Faith C of E Ages 4–11
Term fees £6,380

Parents call head Jo Ebner from the delivery suite to register, 'sometimes even before grandparents have been informed of the birth!' she says. Then you have to get through the assessment (siblings get priority) – they're looking for 'a child who is

ILLUSTRATIONS: BOB WILSON/PHOSPHOR ART. BACKGROUND: SHUTTERSTOCK


The Village School

prepared to have a go and has lovely manners.' Alumni go on to all the best day and boarding schools or hop on to Thomas's Battersea for years 7 and 8. Every child from Year 1 up learns a musical instrument; pupils had work selected for display in the National Gallery; and they put on a 'wonderful' production of *Guys and Dolls*. We're wowed by the new 4D immersive classrooms, which magically transport pupils to the top of the Eiffel tower or back in time to hear Martin Luther King.

The Village School

2 Parkhill Road, NW3 2YN ●

Website thevillageschool.org.uk
Head Carol Gay Pupils 100 day girls Faith Non-denom Ages 3–11 Term fees £5,024

Advanced stuff at the Village School, where girls performed *Macbeth* with aplomb last year; the average age of the cast was 10 – 'who says children can't understand Shakespeare?' says deputy head Ellen Bolsom. Year 6 also formed two companies and developed fundraising plans for local charities and the netballers won the Hampstead League. This prep is sandwiched between the splendid homes of Belsize Park and space is at a premium but, gosh, it's used well. Older girls are at the top of the house while the little ones are downstairs by the playground. The school is 'deliberately small' says head Carol Gay, and classes are boutique size. 90 per cent of girls leave for their first choice school, mostly 'local' places like North London Collegiate and City of London – no sweat.

Westminster Cathedral Choir School

Ambrosden Avenue, SW1P 1QH ●

Website choirschool.com
Head Neil McLaughlan Pupils 172 boys, day and boarding Faith RC Ages 7–13 Term fees £5,618; boarding: £2,947 (choristers only)

Big news: Astroturf comes to WCCS. The result? Fewer grazed knees – and hey, applications have doubled, too. We're sure their super results helped: three boys to Westminster; four to Winchester; three to Eton last year. Headmaster Neil McLaughlan says, 'We are looking for bright boys with good hearts'; the school is focused on kindness tempered with academic rigour and the curriculum is brilliantly original. Parents are international types; entrance is by assessment. Don't forget the world-famous choristers, who board full-time (dorms are spacious and spotless). The music programme is first class but sport is getting serious too, with ex-Olympic athletes whipping pupils into shape. A head told us Mr McLaughlan has 'turned an also-ran into a winner.'

Westminster Under School

27 Vincent Square, SW1P 2NN ●

Website westminsterunder.org.uk
Head Philip Lough Pupils 287 day boys Faith C of E Ages 7–13 Term fees £5,678

These boys make light work of winning scholarships to Eton, Winchester and, of course, the mothership, Westminster Upper, where most happily end up. Former head Elizabeth Hill told us, 'all boys come in hungry to learn'; entrance at 7+, 8+ or 11+ is super-selective and competitive – go figure. Ms Hill cultivated the pastoral side of things during her headship; boys are now more streetwise. Philip Lough, formerly of the Hall, is the new head. The music here is outstanding and the 'sport for all' ethos gets boys having a go at the playing fields in Vincent Square. There is a huge sense of tradition: 'Digs' and 'Praemia' are awarded for good work but woe betide any boy who gets a 'Scel'.

Wetherby Prep School

Bryanston Square, W1H 2EA ●

Website wetherbyprep.co.uk
Head Nick Baker Pupils 325 day boys Faith Non-denom Ages 7–13 Term fees £6,450

We do love the Wetherby way: bespoke Lego figures dressed in school uniform, Wetherby-branded Emma Bridgewater mugs, well-scrubbed boys who leap to their feet when you walk into a classroom. The academic curriculum is 'pretty fast-paced', says head Nick Baker, and they've always been savvy on senior-school choices (scholarships to CLSB, Wellington and Teddies last year, and an Outstanding Talent award to Harrow). But parents have breathed 'a collective sigh of relief' at the opening of Wetherby senior school – there's automatic transfer from the prep. Hurray too for the new sports ground, just down the Westway. Nick Baker is 'hot on praise – we're very nice to the children, very nice to the parents.' And, wow, what parents: this is MILF/DILF central, but we're told it's 'still a normal school for normal people. We treat everyone the same.'

LITTLE SIBLINGS

The schools listed below also have prep schools. For their full listings, see the **London Public Schools** section, page 8.

- Alleyn's School ● ●
- City of London School for Girls ●
- Dulwich College ●
- Francis Holland SW1 ●
- The Harrodian ● ●
- Highgate School ● ●
- Ibstock Place ● ●
- James Allen's Girls' School ●
- King's College School ●
- The Lady Eleanor Holles School ●
- Latymer Upper ● ●
- North London Collegiate ●
- Putney High School ●
- Queen's College ●
- Queen's Gate ●
- South Hampstead High School ●
- University College School ●
- Wimbledon High School ●

ROLL CALL

All the major UK private schools attend the **Independent Schools Show.** Be a savvy parent and swot up

Choosing your child's school is an important decision and, at times, a difficult one. There are so many variables to consider as you plot their academic future that the whole process can seem a little overwhelming. Single-sex or co-ed? UK or overseas? Day or boarding? Faith-based or non-denominational? The huge variety of independent schools out there complicates the choice even further. Luckily, help is at hand.

The Independent Schools Show brings together 200 of the best schools in the country and abroad, enabling parents to gather information on the top prep and senior schools across the globe without having to visit them all individually. As a neutral platform, the Independent Schools Show provides you, the parent with the perfect opportunity to ask questions and hash out concerns without feeling under too much pressure. You'll meet representatives from top schools and come away with a greater understanding of how the whole system works. An informed decision starts with the Independent Schools Show. Best of all, as a *Tatler* reader, you can attend the show using this complimentary ticket. Phew!

Saturday 14 November 10am-5pm
Sunday 15 November 11am-4:30pm
Battersea Evolution, Chelsea Bridge Entrance, Battersea Park, London SW11 4NJ
For more information, visit schoolsshow.co.uk















PREP SCHOOLS

SOUTH-EAST

Aldro

Lombard Street, Shackleford, Surrey GU8 6AS ●

Website aldro.org
Head James Hanson Pupils 220 boys, day and boarding Faith C of E Ages 7–13 Term fees Day: £5,830; boarding: £7,550

After 14 years at Aldro, David and Sue Aston leave the school in excellent nick and with a gleaming new sports hall named in their honour. James Hanson has arrived from the Royal School, Haslemere – on his to-do list: fundraising for the new indoor pool. This is the only all-boys prep locally, and pupils spend their time attending cricket festivals, pistol-shooting, rowing – Aldro Regatta on the school's lake is a blast – and taking 'driving tests' for the model railway club. Music has really taken off recently: pupils have won places in the National Children's Orchestra and National Youth Choir. Academically, it's fast-paced and boys win scholarships to Radley, Wellington and Charterhouse. Boarding is very flexi and family-friendly – that means full, weekly or occasional – and the young ones get to have a go on Wednesday nights. One boy tells us: 'My favourite hobby is going to Aldro.'

Ashdown House

Forest Row, East Sussex RH18 5JY ● ●

Website ashdownhouse.co.uk
Head Haydon Moore Pupils 134 day and boarding: 82 boys, 52 girls Faith C of E Ages 4–13 Term fees Day: £5,800; boarding £8,560

We're thrilled to have Ashdown House back in the Guide. It's been through an iffy patch, but head Haydon Moore has put his 'heart and soul' into the school and the magic has returned to this lovely co-ed all-rounder. It's full-boarding, with some flexi options for beginners, and weekends involve baking, tree-climbing, riding, quizzes and tending to the chickens and guinea pigs. Classes are small and the pace is gentle, which 'tricks them into doing rather well', says Mr Moore, who is sharp on selecting the right school for the right child – so that could be King's Canterbury, Sedbergh or Harrow. The school is a member of the Cothill Trust, so Year 7 spend a term at Sauveterre in France and there are field trips to the Malthouse in Dorset. We're pleased to see Ashdown House is back in the game.

Bishopsgate School

Bishopsgate Road, Englefield Green, Surrey TW20 0YJ ● ●

Website bishopsgate-school.co.uk
Head Rob Williams Pupils 367 day; 195 boys, 172 girls Faith C of E Ages 3–13 Term fees £4,691

Lovely head Andrew Cowell has retired and leaves Bishopsgate a rejuvenated school. This prep shrewdly closed its boarding facility and is now focused on being an all-guns-blazing day outfit. Sports results have gone through the roof: three IAPS judo golds; IAPS netball finalists; impressive rowing wins (the river isn't too far). There's a new indoor pool, dining room and forest school. Leavers hop on to Wellington, Bradfield and Teddies. A pupil sweetly told us that Bishopsgate makes learning fun, and parents praise teachers to the rafters (head of French Mademoiselle Jones and Miss Renaudon-Smith, to name but two). The engineering club has started to race electric cars, and an astounding £145,000 was raised for Great Ormond Street Hospital. New head Rob Williams arrives from St Peter's School, Devon, to keep up the good work.

Bruern Abbey

Chesterton, Oxfordshire OX26 1UY ●

Website bruernabbey.org
Head John Floyd Pupils 110 boys, day and boarding Faith C of E Ages 7–13 Term fees Day: £7,293; boarding: £8,775

Winner of our Prep School of the Year award in 2014, Bruern Abbey is truly unique. The school only takes boys with dyslexia and dyspraxia, and after a good dose of special teaching – and a lot of fun – they win places at top schools: Bryanston, Eton and Sherborne last year. It's day- or weekly-boarding and sought after too – five apply for each place. Bruern has new science and music facilities, but the vibe is distinctly scruffy, with a thinly veiled contempt for health and safety – getting muddy on a bike trip or learning to pluck and roast a pheasant in cookery club are more important. The twice-weekly candlelit dinners are legendary, and we love the clearers' tie – a retro number with a wine-and-cheese motif. The school's 25th-birthday party last year, for all teachers, parents and pupils, officially finished at 3am. What a riot.



Caldicott School

Crown Lane, Farnham Royal, Buckinghamshire SL2 3SL ●

Website caldicott.com
Head Simon Doggart Pupils 290 boys, day and boarding Faith C of E Ages 7–13 Term fees Day: £5,565; boarding: £8,205

The news is that Caldicott now has a drone – but don't fear, it's used for clever aerial shots of cricket matches and short films of the school dusted in snow. Nicely situated in 40 acres not far from the M25, Caldicott now has a fleet of eight minibuses picking up London youngsters who prefer the traditional, boys-own ethos out here. Boarding is compulsory in the final two years, and evenings are spent cooking and gardening with the head's wife Mrs Doggart. Mr Doggart himself prefers sport, and the standard is cracking: the school are National Schools Sevens champions and old boy Andrew Strauss turned up for a net session too. The newly formed charity committee raised money to help children in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. There is always a good crop of scholarships: Harrow, Radley and Wellington last year.

Cheam School

Headley, Newbury, Berkshire RG19 8LD ● ●

Website cheamschool.com
Head Mark Johnson Pupils 420 day and boarding: 222 boys, 198 girls Faith C of E Ages 3–13 Term fees Day: £6,465; boarding: £8,750

'A knockout,' says a parent... if schools were films, Cheam would be a Hollywood blockbuster, with head Mark Johnson as its million-dollar megastar. 'Yes, he's pleased with himself,' says a father. 'But wouldn't you be?' When he retires next year, Mr J will have completed eight major capital projects in his 18 years here. We've never seen a more pristine school, from the majestic lily ponds and immaculate cricket pitch to the royal correspondence proudly displayed in the school museum (the Duke of Edinburgh and the Prince of Wales were both pupils). We're sure new head Martin Harris will keep up the hard work when he arrives from Sandroyd next summer. Boarding is flexi or weekly; everyone goes home on a Saturday night. There were 24 scholarships last year: a King's Scholarship to Eton, others



Photograph by HUGO BURNAND

COTHILL HOUSE

ILLUSTRATIONS: BOB WILSON/PHOSPHOR ART. BACKGROUND: SHUTTERSTOCK


Cottesmore

to Marlborough, Wellington and Radley. Lord Lloyd-Webber (an ex-Cheam parent) has given them permission to perform *Cats* next year. Says an insider: Mrs J is 'an absolute legend – we all love her.'

Christ Church Cathedral School

Oxford OX1 1QW ●

Website cccs.org.uk

Head Richard Murray Pupils 145 boys, day and boarding Faith C of E Ages 3–13 Term fees Day: £4,860; boarding: £3,061 (choristers only)

Yet *another* school in Oxford, you say. We say, Christ Church Cathedral School sounds too good to be true. Let's set the scene: performances of *Alice in Wonderland* in the dean's garden; concerts in Christ Church Cathedral; an outdoor classroom in the Meadow; a parents' ball in the college dining hall (as seen in the Harry Potter films). This is a tiny place with a big impact: it's a chorister school (they still wear Tudor-style caps), so the music is excellent: five boys took Grade 8 music exams last year. Ditto the academics: scholarships to Magdalen, Winchester and Abingdon. Head Richard Murray, formerly at Teddies, is new and loved by all. His wife, Hannah, an Oxbridge classicist, has introduced Ancient Greek classes, plus there's a new philosophy club. Parents are academics and professionals and, we're told, don't want the school to become too well known – sorry, the secret's out.

Cothill House

Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX13 6JL ●

Website cothill.net

Head Duncan Bailey Pupils 220 boys, all boarding Faith C of E Ages 8–13 Term fees £8,740

Bucking the co-ed, flexi-boarding trend, Cothill is still unashamedly all-boys, full-boarding – and full up too. This is a low-key, outdoorsy place, where pupils are busy every second of the day, whether tearing around on their BMXs or playing cricket in pyjamas on long summer evenings. Imagine the sheer joy when England's Test cricket captain, Alastair Cook, came to visit and let every boy in the school bowl at him. A mother says the school is 'full of humour and organised chaos', while head Duncan Bailey adds: 'Boys' untucked shirts are more likely to be met by wry smiles than impatience.' Mr Bailey's wife, Maria, keeps a close eye out for homesickness. Eton and Harrow beckon, and when one boy won an art scholarship to Radley, that school said it couldn't offer any more as no one else was in his league.

Cottesmore

Buchan Hill, Pease Pottage, West Sussex RH11 9AU ● ●

Website cottesmoreschool.com

Head Tom Rogerson Pupils 150 day and boarding: 100 boys, 50 girls Faith C of E Ages 4–13 Term fees Day: £5,385; boarding: £7,360

This deeply traditional prep has the loveliest of settings and the house itself has towers, turrets and a glorious, wood-panelled entrance hall. Tom Rogerson is a third-generation head, ably helped by wife Lottie (a real star) and son Wilfred – so the family feel runs deep. It's proper full-boarding with fixed exeats, which might be a tiny bit old-fashioned for some, but the pupils grin from ear to ear and say it's like 'one big sleepover'. The Gatwick Express is only five miles away and there is a handy escorted train service to London. In the classroom, there's lots of individual attention, and pupils leave for Benenden, Tonbridge and King's Canterbury. The rugby and football teams were unbeaten last year, and activities range from ice-skating to bowling – the school has its own bowling alley. Traditional it may be – mobile phones are banned – but iPads and laptops are being rolled out soon.

Cranleigh Prep

Horseshoe Lane, Cranleigh, Surrey GU6 8QH ● ●

Website cranprep.org

Head Michael Wilson Pupils 302 day and boarding: 171 boys, 131 girls Faith C of E Ages 7–13 Term fees Day: £6,035; boarding: £7,475

You know Cranleigh senior school, of course – a popular, ebullient, sporty place. But we're even more impressed with Cranleigh Prep: 32 scholarships – an Eton King's Scholarship, and others to Brighton, Charterhouse and Wellington – and please note a record number of art scholars. The U13 hockey girls are national champions, the school's fourth national hockey title in six years; success at swimming, riding and biathlon too. There are two applications for every place. 'Children are selected on academic merit, commitment and their ability to contribute to school life,' they say. Add to all this the 40 acres of grounds just 50 minutes from London – what's not to love?

Cumnor House

Danehill, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH17 7HT ● ●

Website cumnor.co.uk

Head Christian Heinrich Pupils 390 day and boarding: 205 boys, 185 girls Faith C of E Ages 3–13 Term fees Day £6,145; boarding: £7,315

Christian and Belinda Heinrich have been at Cumnor for 13 years and plan to be there for another 10 – 'Huge strength in continuity,' they say. It's predominantly a day school – no one lives more than 40 minutes away – but fortnightly-boarding (alternate weekends at home) is encouraged in the final two years. Cumnor feeds 20-plus senior schools as far afield as Shrewsbury and Oundle, with 24 scholarships last year. There's a new all-weather surface and next on the list is a vast science centre. Everyone learns a musical instrument for at least two years, and they all take part in drama productions too. We like the sound of Mr H's 'annoyances and innovations' staff meetings: if you bring the former, you also have to come up with the latter.

Dragon School

Bardwell Road, Oxford OX2 6SS ● ●

Website dragonschool.org

Head John Baugh Pupils 844 day and boarding: 504 boys, 340 girls Faith Non-denom Ages 4–13 Term fees Day: £6,480; boarding: £9,340

Oh, where to start with the Dragon, the Oxford prep that has parents perpetually queuing around its leafy block to get in. It's big, truly co-ed and about a third of pupils board.

Its signature is that laissez-faire air (holes in uniform, staff in jeans) but, as head John Baugh says, 'there's a rigour and robustness' too. Let's admire last year's 43 scholarships, including three King's Scholarships to Eton and five to Magdalen. They've just started teaching mindfulness, and the musical outreach programme, where Dragons jam with pupils from 10 local primaries, is booming. The Social Impact Programme is so good they have been named a Changemaker School by social-welfare group Ashoka. We're not sure what that means either, but it sounds good. NB Female teachers are called 'Ma'. It's the way it has always been.

Edge Grove

Aldenham Village, Hertfordshire WD25 8NL

Website edgegrove.com
Head Ben Evans Pupils 399 day and boarding: 244 boys, 155 girls Faith C of E Ages 3–13 Term fees Day: £5,140; boarding: £7,080

Two Dartmoor ponies, property of head Ben Evans, now roam the 28 acres of this wisteria-clad prep. They are not the only thing that's new: iMacs in the music department, state-of-the-art DT and language classrooms, and an adventure-playground area; a new lower-school building is next on the agenda. The sports teams tour the Caribbean and Sri Lanka, the choir sings in Polish and our spy spotted the girls and boys sewing snazzy iPod cases in a textiles class. The garden club is going great guns too. Entry is selective but not aggressively so; academic results are punchy – all pupils secured places at their first-choice senior schools last year and there was one scholarship to Winchester. A parent says: 'Our quiet little boy has bloomed into a confident young man.' Job done.

Elstree

Woolhampton, Reading, Berkshire RG7 5TD

Website elstreeschool.org.uk
Head Sid Inglis Pupils 249 boys, day and boarding Faith C of E
Ages 3–13 Term fees Day: £6,345; boarding: £8,140

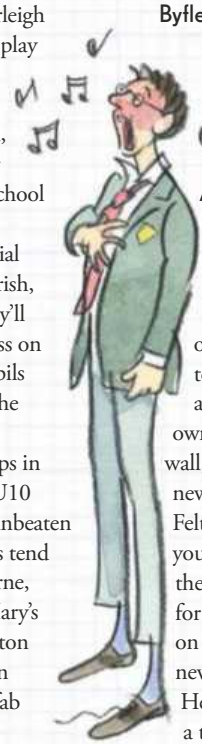
An email from a 'heartbroken' mother, whose son is moving on from Elstree, says, it's a 'terrific' school, 'high-achieving in every category, superb scholarships and ever-increasing competitiveness on the sports fields' (finalists in the national IAPS Soccer Sixes tournament; fistfuls of IAPS judo medals). All credit to the 'Sid effect' – the ever-popular Mr Inglis has 'injected energy and enthusiasm in and out of the classroom. His calm management is apparent throughout the school.' Nearly all children take part in an orchestra, choir or band. There are also two new Astros, the Elstree Award (a homegrown D of E) and, of course, those legendary Big Weekends, when a whole year group stays at school for a weekend of geocaching or a casino night with Downe House. The only negative, according to our correspondent: 'I just wish it took girls!'

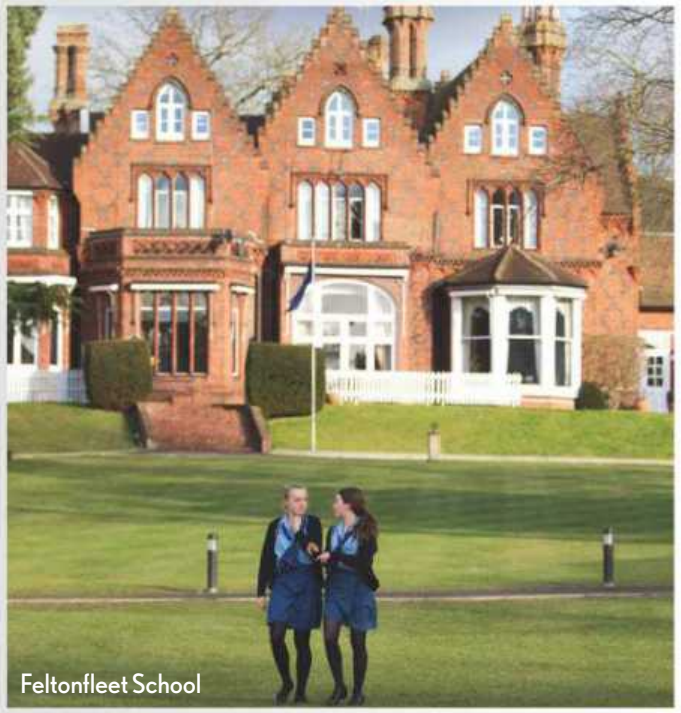
Farleigh School

Red Rice, Andover, Hampshire SP11 7PW

Website farleighschool.com
Head Father Simon Everson Pupils 440 day and boarding: 229 boys, 211 girls Faith RC Ages 3–13 Term fees Day: £5,955; boarding: £7,750

'The only prep school to be at,' says a Hampshire mother: an all-singing, all-dancing place without the slightly frantic, pointy-elbowed air you find elsewhere. 'Farleigh children learn well and play well because they are thoroughly cared for,' says head Father Simon, a former Anglican vicar who started off as the school chaplain. He sees every child as 'a rare and special flower... until they flourish, we don't know how they'll turn out.' Lots of success on the sports fields: 13 pupils represented Wessex at the National Prep Schools' Athletics Championships in Birmingham, and the U10 rugby boys have been unbeaten for two seasons. Leavers tend to head west to Sherborne, Marlborough and St Mary's Shaftesbury (some to Eton and Radley); a third win scholarships. There's a fab new music school and,





Feltonfleet School

DID YOU KNOW?

Ashdown House was designed in 1793 by architect Benjamin Latrobe, who later emigrated to America and worked on the White House and the US Capitol

coming soon, an all-weather pitch. 'Father Simon's serene air makes for a very special school,' says our spy.

Feltonfleet School

Byfleet Road, Cobham, Surrey KT11 1DR

Website feltonfleet.co.uk
Head Alastair Morrison
Pupils 399 day and boarding: 227 boys, 172 girls Faith C of E
Ages 3–13 Term fees Day: £5,340; boarding: £7,340

This is the closest co-ed boarding prep to south-west London, and about 40 per cent of pupils hop on the bus from town each day. Twenty-five acres await them, with their own shooting range, climbing wall, Astroturf and a spectacular new performing-arts centre. Feltonfleet is brilliantly flexible: you can stay a night here and there, get in for breakfast or stay for supper. Full-boarding may be on the horizon, now that there's a new team in the boarding house. Head Alastair Morrison leads a top staff room that guides its wards to great things. Sports teams are in the upper bracket nationally in hockey, swimming, athletics and rugby. Many pupils leave for Cranleigh and Brighton College, and there was a total of 16 scholarships this year – sterling stuff.

Godstowe School

High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP13 6PR

Website godstowe.org
Head David Gainer Pupils 420 girls, day and boarding Faith C of E
Ages 3–13 Term fees Day: £4,965; boarding: £7,295

Godstowe has really nailed the all-girls, boarding prep-school thing (nearly an extinct species these days). Parents are making a dash for what thoroughly good head David Gainer describes as 'dynamic bubble wrap': girls live and learn in a relaxed atmosphere, happiness ensues, and they go on to achieve great things. Simples. It's called 'getting into the Godstowe groove', which might involve girls touring the USA with the lacrosse team, putting on a stellar production of


Lockers Park

Oliver! or winning a place at Cheltenham Ladies', Tudor Hall or Wycombe Abbey. The facilities here are top notch, and the school has had a delivery of a load of Google Chromebooks too. But they are careful with technology; we love that boarders (about half of girls) are issued with a 'Nokia brick' to call home. The dorms here are scarily tidy – you have been warned.

Hall Grove

Bagshot, Surrey GU19 5HZ ●●
Website hallgrove.co.uk
Head Alastair Graham **Pupils** 448 day and boarding: 279 boys, 169 girls **Faith** Non-denom **Ages** 4-13 **Term fees** Day: £4,315; boarding: £5,565

Hall Grove is a charmer – a rosy-cheeks-and-wellies-by-the-door sort of place. The house dates back to 1769, and its stately 40 acres are packed to the gills: there's an outdoor classroom, team-challenge area, new cross-country trails, a boating lake, a toboggan slope (still waiting for snow) and a 'pony grove', with 12 steeds for riding. And we love the sound of the annual country fair. It's mostly day, with some flexi- and weekly-boarders. Pupils excel at rugby, hockey and golf, and leavers win places at Benenden, Bradfield and Wellington; a good chunk to selective grammars too. Headmaster Alastair Graham says: 'We are definitely not an 11-plus sweatshop' – he is very focused on providing a balanced education and very good at finding the right school for the right child. He also happens to breed Labrador puppies.

Handcross Park School

Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH17 6HF ●●
Website handcrossparkschool.co.uk
Head Graeme Owton **Pupils** 335 day and boarding: 185 boys, 150 girls **Faith** C of E **Ages** 2–13 **Term fees** Day: £5,860; boarding: £7,490

Handcross Park's popularity is flying high. When head Graeme Owton took over in 2011, there were 182 pupils on the roll; it's now up to a much healthier 335 – 'Time for the exciting stuff now,' he says. Handcross is part of Brighton College's family of schools, but leavers also head for the likes of Winchester and Charterhouse. Boarding is full or weekly (no flexi), and they're introducing a Monday morning/Friday evening London bus service. The girls' dorms are some of the nicest our spy has seen, although the names (Kindness, Justice, Hope...) take a bit of getting used to. There's a smart, purpose-built music school, an organic veg patch, chickens and two new piglets (no plans to eat them). In a neat piece of nominative determinism, the head of English is called... Mrs English.

Highfield

Highfield Lane, Liphook, Hampshire GU30 7LQ ●●
Website highfieldschool.org.uk
Head Phillip Evitt **Pupils** 245 day and boarding: 130 boys, 115 girls **Faith** C of E **Ages** 8–13 **Term fees** Day: £6,525; boarding: £7,850

Phillip Evitt won our Best Head of a Prep School award last year. He is respected by peers, parents and pupils alike and we've always liked his approach: hard work, a good dose of fun, new endeavours that add excitement and an inclusive ethos to make everyone feel loved. Highfield has 175 acres of grounds and pupils are super-outdoorsy: the new D of E-style Highfield Keys Programme combines community outreach with bushcraft, outward bound and leadership training. The school is privately owned and parents are mostly ex-London, with a smattering of internationals. Boarding is weekly; spaces are at a premium. The modern (iPads in Years 7 and 8, biomass boilers) rubs along well with the traditional (letter-writing on Sundays). Highlights last year included an ambitious production of *Death in Verona*, and sports stars playing county hockey, cricket and netball. Pupils leave in fine shape for the next step, which might be Marlborough, Benenden or Canford.

Holmewood House School

Langton Green, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 0EB ●●
Website holmewoodhouse.co.uk
Head James Marjoribanks **Pupils** 475 day and boarding: 257 boys, 218 girls **Faith** Non-denom **Ages** 3–13 **Term fees** Day: £5,820; boarding: £6,880

Head James Marjoribanks is looking for pupils with 'open minds and hearts' – to fill with glorious things, of course. Mandarin and philosophy are now compulsory in Year 8, and computer coding and Greek mythology are par for the course. With little heads so jam-packed with knowledge, it's no wonder they scooped 19 scholarships last year to the likes of Eton and Wellington. Holmewood House sits in a beautiful spot close to Tunbridge Wells and is very popular with relocating Londoners. Boarding is weekly; there is also an offer of fixed 15 nights a term. Children are encouraged to get out in the fresh air: the football, squash and shooting teams are unassailable. There are plans to restore the walled garden to its former glory, and a 'digital learning hub', with eight wi-fi-connected classrooms, is on the way.

Horris Hill

Newton, Newbury, Berkshire RG20 9DJ ●
Website horrishill.com
Head Giles Tollit **Pupils** 120 boys, day and boarding **Faith** C of E **Ages** 7–13 **Term fees** Day: £6,175; boarding: £8,320

Horris House is traditional in the best sense – from the game of Prisoner Base after breakfast to the mealtime 'scavenging' (when your table runs out of food, you raid other ones). Academic standards are high, 'arguably the best results outside London,' says head Giles Tollit, citing four scholarships to Winchester and a King's Scholarship to Eton ('From a scholarship group of six!'). They still have the termly 'remove' system, which means boys move up a class as soon as they are ready. Dorms are fab and extraordinarily tidy (not just for our visit), and plans are in place for a new sports hall and theatre – there's a smashing new head of sport too, so HH's days of being the 'non-sporty

prep' are well and truly over. Trips and activities galore at weekends – it helps that almost all staff live on site. More positives: very little TV and no electronic gadgets.

Lambrook

Winkfield Row, Bracknell, Berkshire RG42 6LU

Website lambrook.berks.sch.uk
Head Jonathan Perry **Pupils** 510 day and boarding; 313 boys, 197 girls **Faith** C of E **Ages** 3–13 **Term fees** Day: £5,954; boarding: £7,139

Conservation expeditions to Transylvania and watching a shark dissection in South Africa – that's Lambrook's take on the school trip. This is a place that has raced up parents' most-desirable list, and is now a destination prep. Many pupils bus in from west London (cue a more jet-set clientele), but there are 50 beds up for grabs for boarders (all very flexi). There's a new swimming pool and theatre – a group went to the Edinburgh Fringe last year, which is very rare for a prep. Sport is plentiful and successful: almost 1,200 fixtures a year, 70 per cent won. Pupils achieved a record 22 scholarships last year, to the upper crust of the South-East. If this all sounds a bit ritzy, a bit full-on, you should know we love head Jonathan Perry and his wife, Jenny, and that this is one of the most welcoming schools we've visited. Mr Perry says that they give pupils 'feathers to fly' – and they're soaring.

Lockers Park

Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire HP1 1TL

Website lockerspark.herts.sch.uk
Head Christopher Wilson **Pupils** 149 boys, day and boarding **Faith** C of E **Ages** 4–13 **Term fees** Day: £5,390; boarding: £7,450

The happiness of the boys is paramount at this rough-and-tumble prep, and our spy spotted pure elation on pupils' faces as they careened around the grounds, constructing mammoth-sized dens. The music at Lockers Park is terrific: 95 per cent of boys play an instrument – 'If you're not up to Grade 5, you're no one,' jokes head Christopher Wilson. Terrific national triumphs in skiing and ju-jitsu last year too. About half board (full, weekly or flexi); day boys and boarders mix very well; and parents are rushing to register for the sparkly new pre-prep. Class sizes are small and there's a new senior-school preparation programme for Year 6; leavers move on to Bedford, Harrow and Haileybury. We think Lockers Park has bucketfuls of character – the Dark Tower game, when boys play trolls and goblins at sundown across the grounds, sounds inspired.

Ludgrove

Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 3AB

Website ludgrove.net
Head Simon Barber **Pupils** 190 boys, all boarding **Faith** C of E **Ages** 8–13 **Term fees** £8,450

We love Ludgrove for its quietly understated charm (no helicopter parents here, in either sense), the straightforward boarding (everyone has the same fortnightly exeats), the fabulous match teas (credit to the new pastry chef) and the team at the top, Simon and Sophie Barber. Most of all, we like the engaging, chatty pupils: ask a Ludgrove boy how he fills his spare time and brace yourself for a long and glorious tally. It's non-selective, which makes the list of senior-school destinations all the more impressive: over 70 per cent go to Eton, Harrow and Radley, others to Winchester, Marlborough, Tonbridge et al. One senior boy made a rowing boat in CDT; another won the U16 Independent Schools' Bagpipe Competition (no mean feat for a Sassenach prep). The new 350-seat theatre has had, they tell us, a 'spectacular impact' on school life, 'bolstering the confidence and character of every boy'.



Milbourne Lodge

Arbrook Lane, Esher, Surrey KT10 9EG

Website milbournelodge.co.uk
Head Stephen Ilett. From January 2016, Judy Waite **Pupils** 245 day: 190 boys, 55 girls **Faith** C of E **Ages** 4–13 **Term fees** £4,500

Surely the smartest blazers in Surrey are those streaming into Milbourne Lodge – the smartest cookies too, with scholarships to King's Wimbledon, Charterhouse and St Paul's last year. The small cohort of girls also win places at Wycombe Abbey and Benenden.



ML is very academic and can be very selective; roughly five applicants per place. The pre-prep is non-selective (little ones continue through) and, to satisfy demand, the school is expanding from the bottom up; reception now has two forms. A new science lab, classrooms and changing rooms are coming soon. Pupils love the school game of Ambush. Parents (intelligent, successful, professional) love the down-to-earth vibe maintained by head Stephen Ilett. Sadly Mr Ilett is off to Port Regis, with Judy Waite taking his place next year.

Moulsford

Moulsford-on-Thames, Oxfordshire OX10 9HR

Website moulsford.com
Head Ben Beardmore-Gray **Pupils** 336 boys, day and boarding **Faith** C of E **Ages** 4–13 **Term fees** Day: £5,075; boarding: £6,365

We are big fans of Ben and Sarah Beardmore-Gray, who were at Mowden Hall and have now arrived at all-boys prep Moulsford. The school has a knockout setting on the Thames near Wallingford – perfect for trips to 'Goose Poo Island' and the annual reenactment of the Battle of Trafalgar. The B-Gs have inherited a top school and brilliant staff, but expect them to take it to the next level: more extracurricular options; more technology – as much Airfix club as iPads. Parents are very local; it's really a day school with a bit of boarding (again, expect

the latter to improve) and there is no Saturday school. Sport, particularly rugby, cricket and judo, is great, and boys win places at Bradfield, Millfield, Abingdon and Radley. Our spy was bowled over by Moulsford and felt her mini-guides were incredibly lucky to be there.

New College School

Savile Road, Oxford OX1 3UA 🔵

Website newcollegeschool.org
Head Robert Gullifer Pupils 160 day boys Faith C of E Ages 4–13 Term fees £4,791

This school has such close connections to its mothership, New College, that, according to head Robert Gullifer, schoolboys 'plug into the university' when they like: they can play in the cloisters or on the famous Mound, view Newton's notebook first-hand and make full use of the manicured playing fields. New College School is a small, accomplished community. The parents' association raised £10,000 to spruce up the pavilion recently, and last year the boys performed *The Three Musketeers* entirely in French. The headline performance to catch is the choristers (rock stars of their genre), and music across the board is sublime. Pupils aren't bad on the hockey pitch either. An impressive 75 per cent of leavers won scholarships last year to local big-hitters like Magdalen College School and Teddies.

Papplewick

Windsor Road, Ascot, Berkshire SL5 7LH 🔵

Website papplewick.org.uk
Head Tom Bunbury Pupils 201 boys day and boarding Faith C of E Ages 6–13 Term fees Day: £6,905; boarding: £8,995

You can debate the pros and cons of co-ed versus single-sex until you're blue in the face, but ask your average boy to define his perfect school and he'll come up with something very like Papplewick. For head Tom Bunbury, it's all about 'celebrating boys' individual spark', be it art (the best we've seen in a prep), music (the choir is up to cathedral standard), rowing on Eton's Dorney Lake or snake-charming (there's an awesome herpetology club). Boarding is flexi and family-friendly; day boys jump on buses from Chiswick and Brook Green. Double figures head on to Eton and Harrow; others to Winchester, Charterhouse and Marlborough, with a record number of scholarships last year. Mr Bunbury is passionate about getting each boy into a school that matches his abilities and confidence. We love the sound of the U8s v Mothers football tournament. (The boys won. Just.)

The Pilgrims' School

The Close, Winchester, Hampshire SO23 9LT 🔵

Website thepilgrims-school.co.uk
Head Tom Burden Pupils 230 boys, day and boarding Faith C of E Ages 4–13 Term fees Day: £5,895; boarding: £7,445

Little chaps dart around this Winchester choir school like human Smarties in their red, green and blue jumpers (denoting which choir they belong to). Music 'infuses the life of the school', says our spy, and pupils performed at the Proms, reached the finals of BBC Young Chorister of the Year and won 11 music awards to Eton, Wellington and Winchester last year. Tom Burden, head since January, has reshaped the school day, and there are additional boarding places and a bumper new weekend programme. Hanging out in the dorms is a hoot, and they are all themed: surf shacks, superheroes and Banksy graffiti for the senior boys. Martin Johnson popped in for a bit of rugby coaching so, rest assured, it's not just about the music.

Saint Ronan's School

Water Lane, Hawkhurst, Kent TN18 5DJ 🔵🌸

Website saintronans.co.uk
Head William Trelawny-Vernon Pupils 400 day and boarding: 220 boys, 180 girls Faith C of E Ages 3–13 Term fees Day: £5,477; flexi-boarding: £35 a night

Home-grown food and Auntie Manda in the head's office define Saint Ronan's family feel. Auntie Manda's brother is headmaster William Trelawny-Vernon (Mr T-V) – he and his wife, Emma, are only the fifth family to run the school in its 132-year history. This prep is a lively, eccentric place: pupils breed pigs and there is a 'funky dancing' club. Brilliant! There is a rigorous side too: pupils won 35 scholarships last year and, over the past decade, they have gone on to 50 different schools. There is a fabulous music department, which even has a bassoon quintet. Sport is plentiful (fencing, lacrosse, sailing and golf), and activities include beekeeping and mountain-biking. The Duchess of Cornwall opened the new Astro last year, in honour of her brother, Old Ronian Mark Shand; it's now known by his nickname – Shandy-ba.

St Andrew's Pangbourne

Buckhold, Pangbourne, West Berkshire RG8 8QA 🔵🌸

Website standrewspangbourne.co.uk
Head Jonathan Bartlett Pupils 274 day and boarding: 146 boys, 128 girls Faith C of E Ages 3–13 Term fees Day: £5,400; flexi-boarding: £29.50 a night

Splendid outgoing head David Livingstone describes St Andrew's as 'a diamond of a school that no one knows about'. With a top new headmaster, Jon Bartlett from Moor Park, and a waiting list for places, we'd say they're riding high. The grounds are in woodland, so there's plenty of opportunity for outside fun – St Andrew's have been British Schools Orienteering Association champions for three consecutive years. Quite something, that. It's mainly day, and the parent body is 'very Berkshire'; parents retire to the school coffee shop after the morning 'kiss and drop'. Pupils move on to Bradfield, Wellington and Queen Anne's. St Andrew's also thinks outside the box: it's started an intellectual-character initiative to promote positive thinking, and it was the first prep school to start Young Enterprise.

St Hugh's

Carswell Manor, Faringdon, Oxfordshire SN7 8PT 🔵🌸

Website st-hughs.co.uk
Head Andrew Nott Pupils 337 day and boarding; 188 boys,



The Pilgrims' School


St Hugh's

149 girls Faith C of E Ages 3–13 Term fees Day: £5,960; boarding: £7,135
St Hugh's is a delightful place with a loyal following – and none of the hustle, hype and general hassle of getting into Oxford. Most enquiries come through the West Oxfordshire grapevine, from parents who love the rural vibe, the flexi-boarding and brill CE results. St Hugh's intake is broad and so are leavers' destinations, but all head on to top schools (14 scholarships last year). It is just as keen on debating and public speaking as it is on den building and the forest school. The choir performed in Venice last year to great applause and St Hugh's has a terrific sporting reputation. We also hear that the food is excellent – ditto pupils' manners.

St John's Beaumont

Priest Hill, Old Windsor, Berkshire SL4 2JN

Website stjohnsbeaumont.org.uk
Head Giles Delaney Pupils 310 boys, day and boarding Faith RC Ages 3–13 Term fees Day: £5,530; boarding: £8,390
This corner of Berkshire is heaving with all-boys' prep schools but St John's has a slightly different flavour. This is a Jesuit school (60 per cent of pupils are RC, and they're given priority at entrance) and reflection and charity underpin its ethos. Head Giles Delaney is doing things with flair (and we're not just talking about his snappy suits), turning out well-rounded boys to Winchester, Harrow and Wellington. There is a waiting list for boarding places (popular with Europeans); day pupils come from as far as Chiswick. It's all very structured – every nanosecond on the timetable counts, whether it's training for an open-water swim, listening to a lecture or collaborating musically online with students in Chicago. The school is looking for altruistic types; 'old-fashioned manners are high on the list too,' says the registrar.

Shrewsbury House School

Surbiton, Surrey KT6 6RL

Website shrewsburyhouse.net
Head Kevin Doble Pupils 320 day boys Faith C of E Ages 7–13 Term fees £5,555
Local rivals are green about Shrewsbury House's academic record: two King's Scholarships to Eton last year, plus others to Winchester and Tonbridge. Not to mention their success outside the classroom: U9 and U11 national rugby champions; bucketloads of distinctions and merits in music exams. The school certainly lives up to its motto *Alta Peto* – aim high. Nevertheless, head Kevin Doble promotes breadth, so pupils can try their hand at jazz music, pottery or gardening. Parents are very involved, and have a golf society known as 'Shags'. Staff did the Three Peaks Challenge in aid of the school's foundation. There's a new bus into school from Fulham, and admission is by assessment or the Headmaster's list – it's debatable which route is less stressful. Either way, it's worth it.



Summer Fields

Mayfield Road, Oxford OX2 7EN

Website summerfields.com
Head David Faber Pupils: 240 boys, day and boarding Faith C of E Ages 8–13 Term fees Day: £6,967; boarding: £8,997
'The ultimate Eton feeder,' says an insider. Impressive stuff. As any fule kno, Eton entry is becoming more and more competitive, so there's some very hard work going on among these gorgeous green acres, slap bang in the centre of Oxford. Last year, 19 boys went on to Eton and 11 to Radley (scholarships to both); others to Harrow, Winchester et al. It's full-boarding, so weekends are fun-packed; boys live in lodges with all the eight-year-olds starting off together. There are whizz-bang sports facilities and a new pavilion; they're particularly hot on athletics, with medals galore at the National Prep Schools' Championships. Boys are impeccable, with faultless manners. We like the school custom of passing peg numbers on from father to son. 'Still very traditional and certainly not a place for the faint-hearted,' says our mole – but for the right boy, it's unbeatable.

Sunningdale School

Sunningdale, Berkshire SL5 9PY

Website sunningdaleschool.co.uk
Head Tom Dawson Pupils 110 boys: 10 day, 100 boarding Faith C of E Ages 7–13 Term fees Day: £5,790; boarding: £7,450
Head Tom Dawson doesn't hold back. 'They absolutely *love* it here,' he says, and the boys at this full-boarding, full-on prep certainly seem to. They love camping in the grounds on summer weekends; they love reptile club; they love film nights in the lecture theatre. Sunningdale is a family-owned school with an old-fashioned feel (nicely scruffy buildings, and teachers don tweed jackets and cords), but there's a new library and the IT facilities have had an overhaul – story time is now over the Sonos audio system. The U11s are unassailable on the football and rugby circuits, and the school had its biggest scholarship haul in 10 years in 2014; most boys leave for Harrow, Stowe or Sherborne. One boy was so good at the trumpet he performed at Ronnie Scott's – and clearly absolutely loved it.

Twyford School

Twyford, Winchester, Hampshire SO21 1NW

Website twyfordschool.com
Head Dr Steve Bailey Pupils 402 day and boarding: 215 boys, 187 girls Faith C of E Ages 3–13 Term fees Day: £6,039; boarding: £7,600
Twyfordians are a reliable sort: you can rely on them to win scholarships – 21 last year, to schools such as Winchester, St Swithun's and Canford; to dominate on the sports pitches – the girls' cricket team are ferocious; and to perform with aplomb, like they did in *La Bohème* at the Grange Park Opera. Dr Steve Bailey encourages independent thinking and the pupils we met were brilliantly forthright. Boarding is weekly – most start off with a night or two. On Saturdays there's a break from school – just 'apprenticeships' in things like rock school, bushcraft, Arabic or circus skills. The opportunities are wondrous and Twyford has a loyal fan club, but we've heard grumbling that high-achievers get the most attention and that for some it's all work and no play – which, as you know, makes Jack (and Jill) a dull child.

Walhampton

Walhampton, Lymington, Hampshire SO41 5ZG

Website walhampton.com
Head Titus Mills Pupils 360 day and boarding: 188 boys, 172 girls Faith C of E Ages 2–13 Term fees Day: £5,365; boarding: £7,210
Super-head Titus Mills has pulled Walhampton's socks right up over the past few years (new logo, new uniform, new life). 'It's good, old-fashioned schooling with a moral backbone,' says a mother. Throw in a dynamite location – the New Forest with sweeping grounds stretching to the Solent – and an inspiring staff room and you're on to a winner. There's a *Swallows and Amazons* spirit here: pupils are busy beekeeping, fencing, filmmaking or Russian folk-dancing. They enact the Battle of Agincourt on the lawn, the Battle of Hastings on

horses and Trafalgar on sailing boats on the lake. Last year, leavers won scholarships to Radley, Canford and Winchester. Pupils are mainly day, with a small boarding contingent; London parents are wising up to all that's here and the quick train service. Big building projects are in the pipeline – keep an eye on this one.

Wellesley House

Ramsgate Road, Broadstairs, Kent CT10 2DG ●●

Website wellesley.kent.sch.uk
Head Simon O'Malley Pupils 142 day and boarding: 86 boys, 56 girls
Faith C of E Ages 7–13 Term fees Day: £6,180; boarding: £8,170

This whizzy Kent prep is all about the boarding, which is a good thing since they do it so darned well. A full-on school week, bags of sport and weekends packed with activities like scuba diving, zumba and archery build independent, resilient young things. Girls' boarding spaces in particular are at a premium; their home, the Orchard, has been run for 25 years by the legendary Mattie and Elena Nichol. An insider describes head Simon O'Malley as 'impressive, approachable – you would be sold on the school by him alone'. Mr O'Malley's Hungry for History initiative is grabbing headlines, with talks from Sir Hew Strachan and Dan and Peter Snow. The sea is right there, but trains to St Pancras only take an hour. Pupils leave for Benenden, Charterhouse and King's Canterbury, often with academic scholarships.

Westbourne House

Shopwyke, Chichester, West Sussex PO20 2BH ●●

Website westbournehouse.org
Head Martin Barker Pupils 460 day and boarding: 255 boys, 205 girls
Faith C of E Ages 2 ½–13 Term fees Day: £5,495; boarding: £6,735

Westbourne House is a big, action-packed place 'akin to a mini public school', says head Martin Barker. His priority is 'getting good teachers and keeping them' – the end result: alumni charging off to Wellington, Marlborough and Brighton College. Charity is a big deal here, spearheaded by Mrs B; an impressive £80,000 was raised in 2014, and a four-year partnership with the Royal British Legion kicked off with the unveiling of a 12ft poppy on the school's grand portico. It's weekly-boarding, but a Sunday-night option may be introduced for parents who are South-Coast weekenders. The girls' boarding house has a fabulously equipped kitchen, complete with iPads for pupils to snap their culinary masterpieces. Next up: a £2m music school with a 120-seat concert hall.

Windlesham House

Washington, Pulborough, West Sussex RH20 4AY ●●

Website windlesham.com
Head Richard Foster Pupils 380 day and boarding; 216 boys, 164 girls Faith Non-denom Ages 4–13 Term fees Day: £7,150; boarding: £8,320

'A very happy, vibrant school, with wonderful facilities and in a lovely rural setting,' says a father. We love Windlesham for its blend of happy-go-lucky informality and trad prep-school structure, for its well-rounded, high-achieving children (leavers went to 35 different schools last year), its superb pastoral care and the 'utterly charming' dream team of Richard and Rachel Foster. Boarding starts in Year 4 (no flexi here), and there are 100-plus children in school every weekend. The art and DT studios are inspiring; a new sports hall is next on the building list. We're impressed by Windlesham's lecture programme too – speakers at a recent event for 'emerging young leaders' included Eton head Tony Little and Francis Maude.

Woodcote House School

Snows Ride, Windlesham, Surrey, GU20 6PF ●

Website woodcotehouseschool.co.uk
Head Henry Knight Pupils 105 boys, day and boarding Faith Non-denom Ages 7–13 Term fees Day: £5,450; boarding: £7,250

We've always loved the fact that Woodcote is less flashy than certain other preps, but (drum roll) there are new classrooms, a new theatre and – very Woodcote, this – a new pig pen in the woods. Last year's CE results were a school record, and the scholarship boards are something to behold. 'There is no hiding place at Woodcote,' they tell us. 'Every boy will be in a team, will be on stage, will be in a concert and will be helped/pushed in class.' Head Henry Knight is, among other things, a wizard at senior-school selection. The Paterson family has owned Woodcote since 1931 and is still involved in its day-to-day life. The new London bus service has been such a success that they are reviewing their (previously relaxed) admissions process. What are you waiting for?


Wellesley House

LITTLE SIBLINGS

The schools listed below also have prep schools. For their full listings, see the **South-East Public Schools** section, page 26.

- Abingdon School ●
- Ardingly College ●●
- Bancroft's School ●●
- Bedales School ●●
- Bede's ●●
- Bedford School ●
- Brighton College ●●
- Caterham School ●●
- Haberdashers' Aske Boys' School ●
- Headington School ●
- The King's School, Canterbury ●●
- Magdalen College School ●
- New Hall School ●●
- The Oratory School ●●
- Oxford High School ●
- St Catherine's, Bramley ●
- St Swithun's School ●

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LONDON PLAY

PREP SCHOOLS

SOUTH-WEST


Hatherop Castle

Beaudesert Park School

Minchinhampton, Stroud, Gloucestershire GL6 9AF ● ●
Website beaudesert.gloucs.sch.uk
Head James Womersley Pupils 436 day and boarding: 234 boys, 202 girls
Faith C of E Ages 3–13 Term fees Day: £5,310; boarding: £6,900

'BP is very much the go-to prep in the county,' says an insider; relocating Londoners love the unpressured air at this big Gloucestershire co-ed. The grounds are gorgeous too, with lots of trees for climbing and a bespoke adventure playground. James and Fiona Womersley run the show. Mr W says, 'We send them off fizzing at 13.' Cheltenham Ladies', Cheltenham College and Marlborough are popular choices. They're also very fizzy on the sports field: the hockey and swimming teams had great success at the IAPS finals. There's a new £3m performing arts centre and pupils adore the trips to the nearby Rush Skatepark. Boarding is flexi or weekly. 'We run it just like a hotel,' says Mrs Womersley. 'That's what parents want these days.'

Chafyn Grove

Bourne Avenue, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP1 1LS ● ●
Website chafyngrove.co.uk
Head Jeremy Griffith Pupils 303 day and boarding: 189 boys, 114 girls
Faith C of E Ages 3–13 Term fees Day: £5,295; boarding: £7,315

The wonderful Eddy Newton is off to head up the Cothill Trust – but never fear, Chafyn Grove is in safe hands with interim head Jeremy Griffith. This is a city prep that nevertheless feels pleasantly un-urban and has space for fantastic facilities – a new music school is on the cards. It's an unpretentious place and, as a spy says, 'totally confident in its own skin'. Leavers move on to West Country big hitters (12 scholarships last year), plus a few to Eton and Harrow. We're fans of Enterprise Skills – a marketing course with a *Dragon's Den*-style pitch – and sport is tremendous: four hockey teams reached the IAPS national finals this year.



Boarding is mostly flexi. Pupils are impeccably mannered and 'absolutely GORGEOUS' (note the capital letters), exclaims our mole.

Hanford

Child Okeford, Dorset DT11 8HN ●
Website hanford.dorset.sch.uk
Head Rory Johnston Pupils 102 girls, day and boarding Faith C of E Ages 7–13 Term fees Day: £5,800; boarding: £7,050

'Practically perfect in every way,' says one mother of Hanford, although even she admits it could do with a lick of paint. 'Grounds, stunningly beautiful; pupils, divine; academic reputation, sensational.' (A top scholarship to Marlborough, among many others.) The sports facilities aren't up to much, but despite this they win matches against much bigger rivals. Riding, under the watchful eye of Miss Canning, the daughter of Hanford's founders, is almost compulsory. The music school is small but sweet, and you can play any instrument you like. Everyone wears home clothes, the scruffier the better. Head Rory Johnston and his wife George have just finished their first year in charge – 'they treat the girls like their own,' we're told – and a little modernisation is on the agenda. Hanford won't suit iPad addicts (Monopoly or racing demon if it's raining), but if we had daughters, we'd send them here.

Hatherop Castle

Hatherop, Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 3NB ● ●
Website hatheropcastle.co.uk
Head Paul Easterbrook Pupils 158 day and boarding: 83 boys, 75 girls
Faith C of E Ages 2½–13 Term fees Day: £4,495; boarding: £6,795

Headmaster Paul Easterbrook and wife Sally have had a fabulous 24 years at Hatherop Castle. Their bespoke approach to education has long helped pupils flourish. Since Hatherop joined the Wishford Schools group last year there has been a major cash influx. What was once shabby has become shiny; fencing, judo, clay-pigeon shooting and street dance are now on offer; food, horticulture and advanced computing have been added to the curriculum; numbers are up and aspirations are high. The standard of drama here has always been superb; a new Canadian-cedar-clad performing arts centre opens soon. Boarding is full, weekly or flexi (there's no Saturday school), and leavers leap on to Dean Close, Blundell's and Abingdon. The setting is splendid, plus the match teas are famously good. An informant calls the school 'something really special'.

Hazlegrove

Sparkford, Somerset BA22 7JA ● ●
Website hazelgrove.co.uk
Head Richard Fenwick Pupils 375 day and boarding: 202 boys, 173 girls
Faith C of E Ages 2½–13 Term fees Day: £5,433; boarding: £7,964

We've seen our fair share of preps in lovely, rambling country houses,

● BOYS ● GIRLS ●● MIXED

but few are as film-set elegant as Hazlegrove. Gravel raked, lawns mown, paint fresh – 'it looks as though Keira Knightley might just wander across the grounds,' says our spy. 'Safeguarding childhood' is one of head Richard Fenwick's top priorities; no one (staff included) is allowed a mobile phone but iPads are on the uniform list. They're hugely successful on the sports fields: the U13 girls' cricket team won the regional Lady Taverners indoor trophy, 'even though our girls' summer sport is rounders'. The dorms are fab and we love the sound of the Millionaires' Club (read a million words and you're in) – and note academic scholarships to Winchester, Marlborough and St Mary's Ascot. Mr Fenwick says the school's success is down to 'good values, good academics, good sport and good drama'. We couldn't put it better.

King's Hall

Kingston Road, Taunton, Somerset TA2 8AA

Website kingshalltaunton.co.uk
Head Justin Chippendale **Pupils** 326 day and boarding: 171 boys, 155 girls
Faith C of E **Ages** 2–13 **Term fees** Day: £5,045; boarding: £7,300

The handsome Georgian house at King's Hall boasts classical splendour inside (even the wallpaper is listed) and a host of glorious activities outside. Children leave here 'gregarious, strong and confident', says head Justin Chippendale, the majority to King's College, Taunton, but some to Canford and Cheltenham Ladies'; 34 won scholarships in 2014. Boarding has creative touches to keep overseas students happy (maps of home and clocks showing local time) and weekly-boarding is very popular – the London train link makes things oh-so-easy. There are amazing views across rolling countryside and top-drawer activities: the arts centre includes a theatre; the library is extensive; and sport is played to national level. The grounds include a 'forest school', fire pits, roundhouses, the Little Wood (woodland with chickens, rabbits and guinea pigs) and a cob oven – to cook pizza, of course.


Leaden Hall

Knighton House

Durweston, Blandford, Dorset DT11 0PY

Website knightonhouse.dorset.sch.uk
Head Sarah Wicks **Pupils** 143 girls, day and boarding **Faith** C of E **Ages** 3–13
Term fees Day: £5,460; boarding: £7,200

New head Sarah Wicks – previously deputy head – is proud of her 'free-range children' who roam the school's 30-acre grounds in cheerful red dungarees. On our visit we spotted Meg and Alfie (the resident pygmy goats), a handful of alpacas (on loan for an open day) and lots of ponies (the stables were refurbished last year). Music is central: the choir sings weekly at the village church and one pupil has taken up the bagpipes. Knighton is a relaxed place – we love that there is a 'gumption prize' – but the school has superb scholarship results (Canford and Sherborne Girls last year) and all leavers won places at their first-choice school this year. Boarding is full, weekly and flexi. Fittingly, the dorms are charming and very Cath Kidston.

Leaden Hall

70 The Close, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP1 2EP

Website leaden-hall.com
Head Julia Eager **Pupils** 140 girls, day and boarding **Faith** Non-denom **Ages** 3–11
Term fees Day: £4,595; boarding: £6,435

Tucked in beside Salisbury Cathedral, with grounds running down to the Avon, Leaden Hall's situation is pure Constable. Inside, you are greeted by a cluster of architecturally prize-winning classrooms and Otto the Owl, the ever-present school mascot. All-girls, day and boarding, Leaden Hall is perfect for the little one who needs a bit of extra swaddling; older girls really look after the younger troupe. It is an eco-school and pupils get creative raising funds for charity – donating money in return for wearing sparkly shoes to school was a good one. Lots of wonderful drama last year and the already-excellent music provision is being boosted with choral and orchestral days. Girls leave academically rounded and often with distinction, to South Wilts Grammar, St Mary's Shaftesbury and Godolphin.

Perrott Hill

North Perrott, Crewkerne, Somerset TA18 7SL

Website perrotthill.com
Head Tim Butcher **Pupils** 225 day and boarding: 125 boys, 100 girls
Faith C of E **Ages** 3–13 **Term fees** Day: £4,970; boarding: £7,180

One jaded London mummy was blown away by the charms of Perrott Hill – the well-mannered pupils, the welcoming parents, the space – and decided to move to Dorset on the spot. No surprise that this lovely country prep is more popular than ever. Its sports stars compete at county, regional and national levels, but everyone has the chance to play in a school team every term – and everyone takes to the stage too. They've rebuilt the sports hall and


Perrott Hill

ILLUSTRATIONS: BOB WILSON/PHOSPHOR ART. BACKGROUND: SHUTTERSTOCK


Sandroyd

DID YOU KNOW?

Pinewood School's summer dog show features three classes: the waggiest tail, the best sit and the best trick

reintroduced Scottish dancing; the choir toured Prague, and Year 8's production of *Fiddler on the Roof* raised the proverbial. Leavers head for Marlborough, Canford et al, with impressive scholarship results. We tipped Rob Morse as a rising star, and lo – he's moving north to Aysgarth. We hear good things about his successor, Tim Butcher.

Pinewood School

Bourton, near Shrivenham, Wiltshire SN6 8HZ ●●

Website pinewoodschool.co.uk
Head Philip Hoyland Pupils 406 day and boarding; 206 boys, 200 girls Faith C of E Ages 3–13 Term fees Day: £5,475; boarding: £6,811

It might feel a bit like you're driving into a farmyard but that's kind of the point about Pinewood. Fresh air is a fact of life, whether its mountain-biking or heading out on one of the famed adventure weekends. The boys and girls are historically furiously sporty, but hats off to the percussion ensemble, who won the UK Chamber Music Championships and performed at Carnegie Hall in New York. Charming head Philip Hoyland has been here 12 years and knows what he's doing. During his tenure, numbers and reputation have reached fever pitch (there are waiting lists) and accolades pour in – 18 scholarships last year and leavers won places at Stowe, Oundle, and Bryanston. Most pupils live within 40 minutes of the school and about a third weekly- or flexi-board, ably overseen by Mrs H – 'a real asset', says a mother.

Port Regis

Motcombe Park, Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 9QA ●●

Website portregis.com
Head Benedict Dunhill (Stephen Ilett from January 2016) Pupils 330 day and boarding: 216 boys, 114 girls Faith C of E Ages 3–13 Term fees Day: £5,999; boarding: £8,100

'Almost too good to be true,' says our researcher, who was impressed by 'the tidiest dorm in Christendom', by the attic common room with surfboards nailed to the ceiling, and by the facilities – 'more advanced than many I have seen in secondary schools.' And we love the fact that children are encouraged to write a letter home every week. Boarding is big, so Port Regis is popular with the international set. 2014 was a bumper scholarship year; we hear that senior schools love Port Regians' independence and their advanced skills in subjects like art and DT – those facilities make a difference. Musicians play in every sort of band and ensemble you can think of, and pupils can choose from more than 70 hobbies, from beekeeping to roller-hockey. After five years here, Benedict Dunhill has been lured to Abercorn prep in the Big Smoke; Stephen Ilett from Milbourne Lodge takes over in the new year.

Sandroyd

Rushmore Park, Tollard Royal, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP5 5QD ●●

Website sandroyd.org
Head Martin Harris Pupils 203 day and boarding: 135 boys, 68 girls Faith C of E Ages 3–13 Term fees Day: £6,525; boarding: £7,900

Sandroyd was once the ancestral home of the Pitt-Rivers family; now children fill its wood-panelled rooms with their infamously raucous ping-pong tournaments. 'There's no preciousness here,' says an insider. The pupils we met were full of Sir Ben Ainslie's visit to open the sleek new sports hall; the revamped theatre is stunning too, plus there's a new biomass boiler to heat the school. Head Martin Harris is fabulous fun; his wife, Catherine, takes cookery and 'loves the children to make a mess'. Mr Harris leaves next summer to take up the headship at Cheam, so watch this space for his successor. Rugby is top notch: the Colts B and U9A teams had unbeaten seasons last year. Pastoral care is brilliant too; boarding is compulsory in Years 7 and 8, and weekend trips include sleepovers at the National History Museum. When they're done having a fabulous time, pupils hop off to Eton, Bryanston, Harrow and Marlborough.

Sherborne Prep

Acreman Street, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 3NY ●●

Website sherborneprep.org
Head Nick Folland Pupils 270 day and boarding: 166 boys, 104 girls Faith C of E Ages 3–13 Term fees Day: £5,345; boarding £7,600

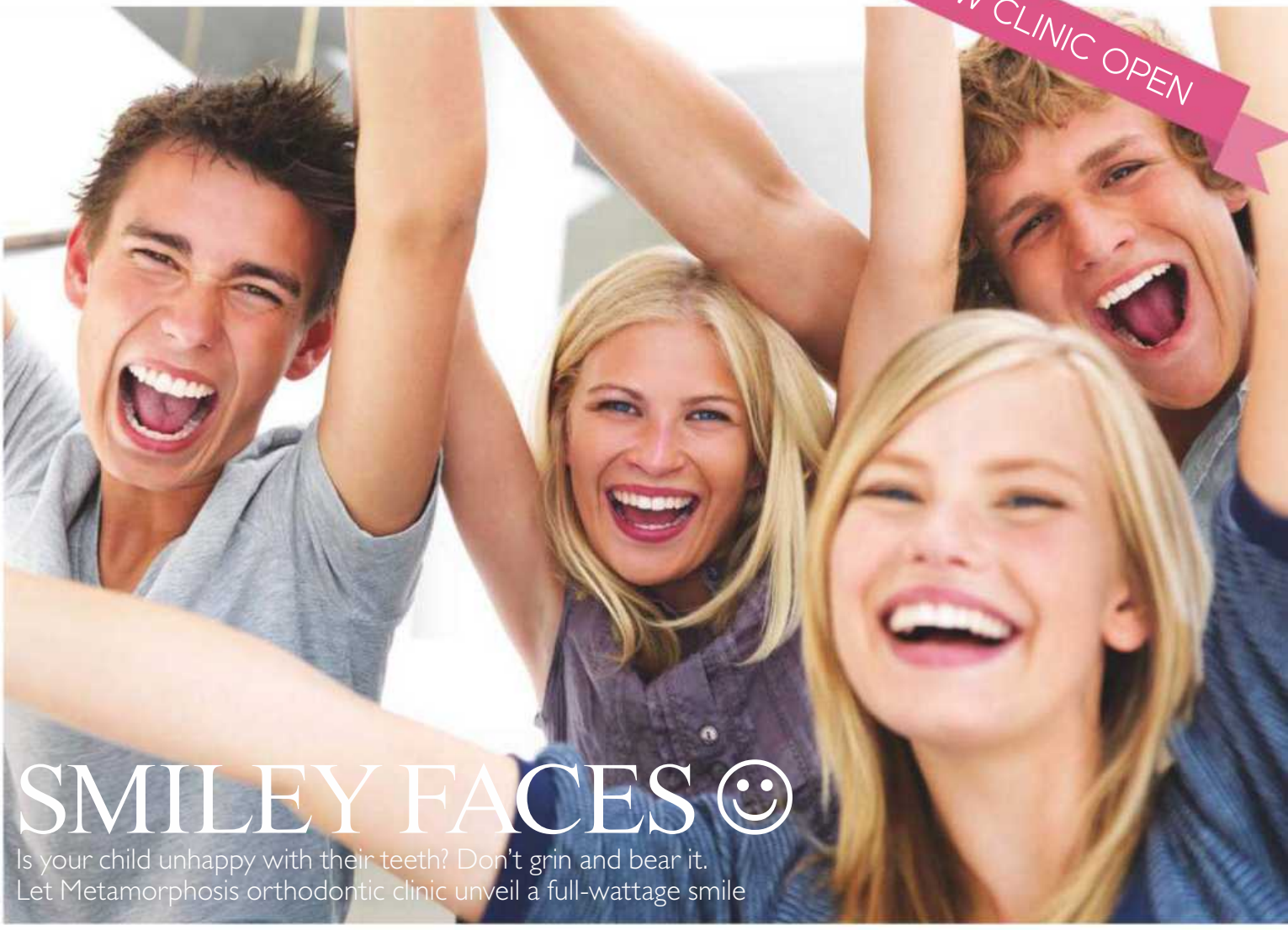
This Dorset school features for the first time in the Guide, sadly just as head Peter Tait retires – for much of Sherborne Prep's success is down to him. Happily, parents are reporting positively on newbie Nick Folland. Watch this space for his new flexi-boarding packages. About half of pupils win places at Sherborne and Sherborne Girls, others head for Winchester and Rugby. The school has camaraderie by the bucketful and is gloriously unpressured: on Saturdays there are no lessons, just climbing, electric-car club, sculpture and more. We love the 'famous dyslexics' board, featuring Einstein, and that when a pupil realised he'd left his teddy at home, a teacher brought one in for him.

LITTLE SIBLINGS

The schools listed below also have prep schools. For their full listings, see the **South-West & Wales Public Schools** section, page 46.

- Badminton School ●
- Blundell's School ●●
- Cheltenham College ●●
- Clayesmore ●●
- Clifton College ●●
- Dean Close School ●●
- Godolphin ●
- Millfield ●●
- Monkton Combe ●●
- Monmouth School ●●
- Stonar ●●
- Westonbirt ●●

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Back to school is an exciting time. It's a fresh academic slate and a chance to catch up with pals after the summer's hiatus. But if your child is changing school or making the leap from secondary education to university, it can also be a time fraught with uncertainty and insecurity. Change can be daunting – there will be new people to meet, friends to make and clubs to join. At a time in their lives when young people are naturally plagued with awkwardness, feeling unhappy about their teeth will make them more self-conscious. The impact of a good smile cannot be overstated – happily the Metamorphosis orthodontic clinic works to achieve just that.

Dr Counihan (recommended in *Tatler*'s Doctors Guide) and Dr Vaughan, together with Dr Faranak Moderai, Dr Sara Akram and a team of specialists, have been transforming pearly-whites for over eight years. Now, they have a swanky new clinic to boot. The premises, which opened in July, is not far from their old clinic and boasts bright, airy interiors in a buzzy central location. This is *the* place to get straight teeth. Here, they offer highly effective treatments for children, teenagers and adults alike. Whether it's for medically driven reasons (such as correcting the effects of thumb-sucking and overcrowding) or simply aesthetic purposes, Metamorphosis can straighten teeth beautifully. They have an array of fixed and removable braces available – and also boast the latest technology in invisible braces. What's more, their surgical know-how means they can tackle more challenging oral concerns such as jaw realignment. The approach at Metamorphosis is truly holistic – the whole face is taken into account to devise a treatment plan most suitable for the individual. Give your child good teeth and you give your child the confidence to shine.

BRACE YOURSELF

DAMON BRACES

These discreet braces produce results fast, with less pressure on the teeth than conventional braces. A more comfortable treatment experience.

INVISALIGN CLEAR BRACES

Almost completely undetectable, Invisalign are the latest in invisible brace technology. Unlike some other orthodontic treatments, they can be removed for eating – so you can still enjoy all your favourite foods.

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Lingual means 'close to the tongue' – they are placed behind the teeth, out of sight, and are ideal for correcting misaligned teeth and bite problems.

***Tatler* readers can enjoy a complimentary orthodontic consultation worth £175 at Metamorphosis. To book, call 020 7731 1077 and quote 'Tatler'. Subject to availability. Offer closes 16 October 2015**

Metamorphosis, 315-317 New Kings Road SW6. Tel: 020 7731 1077; metamorphosisorthodontics.com

PREP SCHOOLS

MIDLANDS

Abberley Hall

Worcester WR6 6DD

Website abberleyhall.co.uk
Head Will Lockett Pupils 297 day and boarding: 178 boys, 119 girls Faith C of E Ages 7–13 Term fees Day: £5,780; boarding: £7,225

Grubby knees are practically compulsory at Abberley Hall. Its 90 acres are teeming with activity: zip wiring, fishing, abseiling – and there's a treehouse for sleepovers. Head (and old boy) Will Lockett arrived last September and 'is settling in well', says a mother. He's off to a cracking start – the school won a record 31 awards to 16 schools last year, including Rugby, Ampleforth and Malvern. Mr Lockett says there is a 'strong culture of performance and participation': the summer fete raised over £30,000 and a production of *West Side Story* was a triumph. Away from home, the rugby and hockey teams head to South Africa biennially, and there are jaunts to the school's chalet in the French Alps. Boarding is mostly full, with a few part-timers. Parents are typically local and unshowy.

Beachborough School

Westbury, Brackley, Northamptonshire NN13 5LB

Website beachborough.com
Head Jeremy Banks Pupils 336 day and boarding: 170 boys, 166 girls Faith C of E Ages 2½–13 Term fees Day: £5,253; flexi-boarding: £30 a night

'A traditional prep school with modern, original twists,' says our spy. There's no resting on past glories here – it's all about good organisation, well-thought-through innovation and lots of constructive praise. Sport is very inclusive: team captains are rotated and everyone gets a chance to play, even if it's for the gloriously named Beachborough Strollers. Art is exceptional – how many other prep schools can boast an artist-in-residence? At breaktime, pupils beetle off into the 30 acres in their boiler suits and wellies to trade den materials in their own pine-cone currency, while matron zips around in her golf buggy. Boarding is weekly or flexi (no full) in some of the most appealing dorms we've seen. Vegetarians, look away now: the school pigs are turned into sausages that the Young Enterprise team sells to a local pub. Watch out, chickens – you're next.

Beeston Hall

West Runton, Cromer, Norfolk NR27 9NQ

Website beestonhall.co.uk
Head Robin Gainher Pupils 130 day and boarding: 79 boys, 51 girls Faith C of E Ages 7–13 Term fees Day: £5,480; boarding: £7,400

If we were the gambling sort, we'd put an outside bet on Beeston Hall to be Prince George's first school. Home is a National Trust estate, right on the Norfolk coast (not far from Sandringham). It's a grounded, low-key school with a loyal local following. Head Robin Gainher, his wife Ali and their team of sprightly staff ensure the curriculum is up to date: computer programming and coding, 'bespoke' folders for targeted studying and lots of public-speaking and ethics debates. Outside the classroom, it's bliss: sailing on the Broads at Wroxham, gardening club, shooting competitions or rustling up a gourmet supper in the boarding house (full- or weekly-boarding here). The result is that pupils flourish at their own pace, which sets them on course for schools like Uppingham, Eton and Stowe.

Bilton Grange

Dunchurch, near Rugby, Warwickshire CV22 6QU

Website biltongrange.co.uk
Head Alex Osiatynski Pupils 308 day and boarding: 179 boys, 129 girls Faith C of E Ages 4–13 Term fees Day: £6,115; boarding: £8,330

Lots of drama at Bilton Grange last year – but only of the thespian variety, of course. Headmaster Alex Osiatynski's push on all things creative (ably abetted by his wife, Freya) resulted in a stonking production of *Honk!* – the first all-school play in many years. Bilton has always been known for its sporting prowess: the Colts A hockey boys reached the IAPS national finals and the new Astro in the Pugin walled garden is a sight to behold. Equestrianism is booming too – so much so that polo lessons are run for the (very involved) parents. Family-style dining has been reintroduced, plus boarders (full, weekly or flexi) now have candlelit suppers four times a term. Half of last year's accomplished leavers won awards to schools including Oundle and Oakham.

The Elms

Colwall, Malvern, Worcestershire WR13 6EF

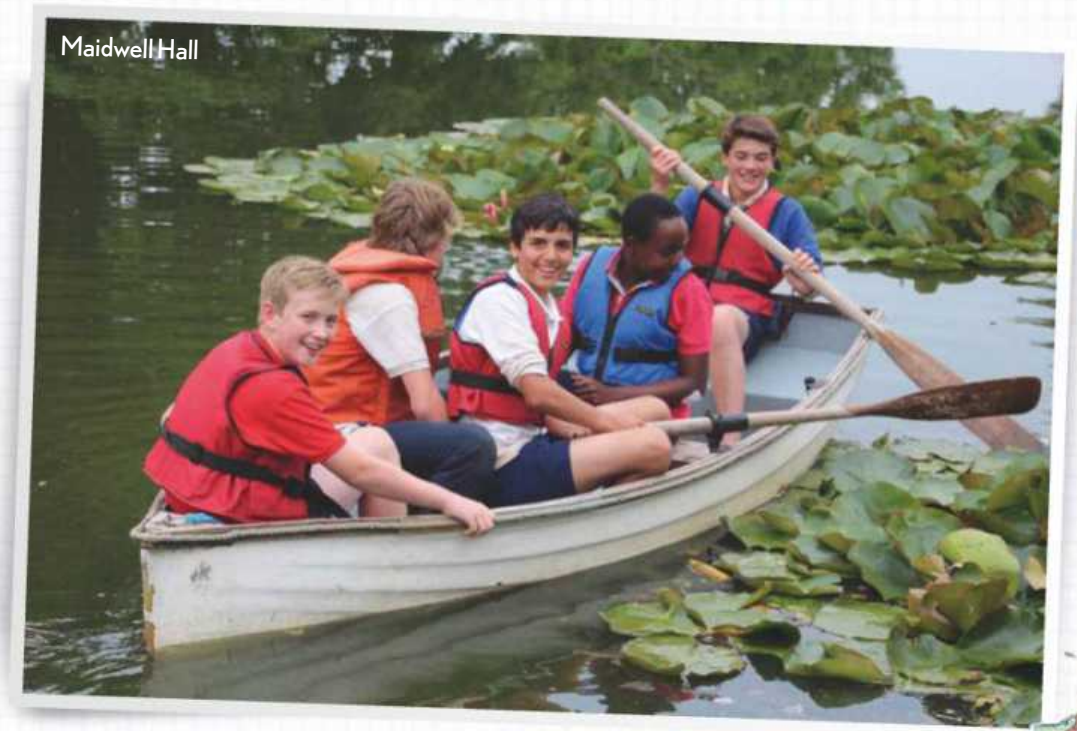
Website elmsschool.co.uk
Head Alastair Thomas Pupils 188 day and boarding: 96 boys, 92 girls Faith C of E Ages 3–13 Term fees Day: £6,550; boarding: £7,355

One of the oldest preps in the UK combines the down-to-earth friendliness and informality of a country school (dogs in classrooms)



Abberley Hall

with the facilities of a shiny South-east hothouse (new science labs and theatre, Astro, indoor pool, stables...). The school farm is the jewel in the Elms' crown, home to cattle and Gloucester Old Spots, one of which becomes the centrepiece of the annual hog roast. There's huge emphasis on the outdoors, with sport six days a week and correspondingly successful teams. Everyone has a bed, and the boarding is as flexi as it gets. Leavers hop on to all the best publics. And did we mention the superlatively delicious food? Lots of homegrown veg and the match teas are renowned on the circuit. Our junior spies signed themselves up to the Elms on the spot.


Maidwell Hall

Foremarke Hall

Milton, Derbyshire DE65 6EJ

Website foremarke.org.uk
Head Richard Merriman Pupils 456
day and boarding: 238 boys, 218 girls
Faith C of E Ages 3–13 Term fees Day: £6,129; boarding: £7,938

If you come for a tour of Foremarke Hall, do stay for lunch – the prep won our Best School Food award last year and the fare on offer is scrumptious. In fact, the pupils are quite handy chefs too: in Outdoor Cooking club they get busy building fires and start grilling away. Foremarke is all Palladian grandeur but there are plenty of modern additions: a new quad; new cricket nets; a new science lab; a restored library – the dining room and pool get a makeover next. Last year, the whole school flocked to see the U11 girls win the IAPS national hockey championships – some achievement – and a record seven pupils were selected for the National Youth Orchestra – ditto. Boarding is full, weekly or flexi and there are many resident dogs in the boarding houses. Most pupils move on to Repton (Foremarke is Repton's prep) but others opt for Eton, Uppingham and Shrewsbury.



King's College School

West Road, Cambridge CB3 9DN

Website kcs.cambs.sch.uk
Head Nicholas Robinson Pupils 420
day and boarding: 235 boys, 185 girls
Faith C of E Ages 4–13 Term fees Day: £4,733; boarding: £7,370

The soundtrack to King's is as glorious as its Cambridge-college setting: there are over 40 (yes, 40!) chamber groups and ensembles, and those famous choristers, of course, who toured Australia and sang angelically in the Sydney Opera House last year. Head Nicholas Robinson says 'there's no pressure on children musically, it is just a way of life', and ensures there is balance. Specialist sports coaches have been appointed; pupils excel at squash, rugby and – unusually – korfball, and work will start on a new sports hall in 2016. Boarding accommodation is spacious yet homely – Mrs Etheridge, who lives in with her brood, runs the show brilliantly. Academically, King's is very much on point, with students winning places at Oundle, Charterhouse and the Perse. An insider says, 'It's a well-oiled machine.' We'd say everything is in perfect harmony.

Maidwell Hall

Maidwell, Northamptonshire NN6 9JG

Website maidwellhall.co.uk
Head Robert Lankester Pupils 118
day and boarding: 82 boys, 36 girls
Faith C of E Ages 7–13 Term fees Day: £5,200; boarding: £8,200

We forecast strong growth from Maidwell Hall last year after it posted great results for 2014/15: £63,000 raised by a 30-mile hike across the Lake District, crossing three of England's highest mountains; National Schools Clay Pigeon Shooting Championships, won; flying colours at CE with places nabbed at Eton, Harrow and Uppingham. The number of girls on the school roll is up, with those figures set to rise, and there's a sky-high rate of 90 per cent full-boarding. It's a traditional place, and the matrons are lovely. The whole-school production of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* was wizard too – and, really, Maidwell is as beautiful as Narnia, with its sprawling grounds and turreted building. Head Robert Lankester says summer fun such as playing 'stepping stones', boating and fly-fishing on the lake epitomises the school. That's pretty idyllic.





Moor Park

Richard's Castle, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 4DZ

Website moorpark.org.uk
Head Charlie Minogue Pupils 240
day and boarding: 127 boys, 113 girls
Faith RC Ages 2 ½–13 Term fees Day: £5,155; boarding: £7,595

'Year 5 built their own wattle-and-daub house yesterday,' we

ILLUSTRATIONS: BOB WILSON/PHOSPHOR ART. BACKGROUND: SHUTTERSTOCK


Old Buckenham Hall

read. Well, yes, of course they did – Moor Park is that sort of place. It's also the sort of place where boarders get up at dawn for an epic running-and-swimming challenge and are served breakfast in bed as a reward, earning the school a nomination for best boarding initiative in the Independent School Awards. For a small, non-selective school, there's a vast haul of scholarships – 20 awards to 12 different schools last year. Leavers go to Eton, Winchester, Downe House or local state schools. Head Jon Bartlett left in the summer for St Andrew's, Pangbourne, but we hear good things about his successor, Charlie Minogue. Like us, he'll love the Queen Anne house, the unselfconscious pupils and the rolling Shropshire hills. 'It's magical,' says an insider. We agree.

Old Buckenham Hall

Brettenham Park, Ipswich, Suffolk IP7 7PH ●●

Website obh.co.uk

Head Tom O'Sullivan **Pupils** 195 day and boarding: 126 boys, 69 girls **Faith** Non-denom **Ages** 3–13 **Term fees** Day: £5,850; boarding: £7,622

New head Tom O'Sullivan already has an adoring fan club – 'he has made a big impact,' says one mother. He's revived traditions such as hosting the local hunt meet, and the school made apple juice from the OBH orchard for the first time last year – it's the little things that count. The pupils here relish a challenge: the Old Buckenham Explorers climbed Scafell Pike and Mount Snowdon, and students happily play county-level sport, sing concerts with acclaimed acapella groups and win scholarships to Ampleforth and Oundle. Boarding is very popular and is pick 'n' mix, with everything from flexi to full. New 'in weekends', a themed masquerade ball and 'Welcome to the Wild West', have been roaring successes. Then again, that might have had something to do with the enormous chocolate fountain.

Orwell Park

Nacton, Suffolk IP10 0ER ●●

Website orwellpark.co.uk

Head Adrian Brown **Pupils** 279 day and boarding: 157 boys, 122 girls **Faith** Inter-denom **Ages** 2½–13 **Term fees** Day: £5,792; boarding: £7,430

It's rather lovely when one's school is a huge Georgian mansion – it means that the local astronomy society can run a stargazing club in the observatory for you. Or that one can listen to edifying lectures in the Orangery on subjects like 'How to look at a Rembrandt' or 'Failure as a learning opportunity'. Or you can simply sit back and admire the magnificent clock tower. Orwell Park has a fearsome sporting reputation: U11 national hockey finalists; three pupils in a prep-school athletics final; skiing trophies galore; U11 national tennis champions. There's a big emphasis on getting involved, whether it's with the school council, boarders' forum or catering committee, or expeditions to Norfolk and Snowdonia as part of the school's leadership programme. Orwell's intake is very local (there are lots of flexi-boarders) but the output is national, with leavers marching on to Oundle, Benenden and Winchester.



Packwood Haugh

Ruyton XI Towns, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY4 1HX ●●

Website packwood-haugh.co.uk

Head Clive Smith-Langridge **Pupils** 217 day and boarding: 153 boys, 64 girls **Faith** C of E **Ages** 2–13 **Term fees** Day: £5,560; boarding: £6,990

This Shropshire prep already has tip-top facilities – spread over 65 acres, they're the best in the area – so head Clive Smith-Langridge can happily 'focus on teaching rather than bricks and mortar'. (NB He also runs the squash club.) And what teaching it is – most leavers head for Shrewsbury, but also Winchester, Rugby and Wycombe Abbey; six music scholarships and exhibitions last year, including an organ exhibition to Monmouth. The U13 boys are national fencing champions – again. More time has been given over to drama, which is blossoming under a new head of department. There is a focus on traditional boarding at Packwood; admittedly numbers are steady, not soaring, with lots opting for flexi, but new computers kitted out with Skype in the boarding houses should help with that.



● BOYS ● GIRLS ●● MIXED

S. Anselm's School

Bakewell, Derbyshire
DE45 1DP

Website sanselms.co.uk
Head Peter Phillips Pupils 209 day and boarding: 119 boys, 90 girls Faith C of E Ages 3–16 Term fees Day: £5,800; boarding: £7,200

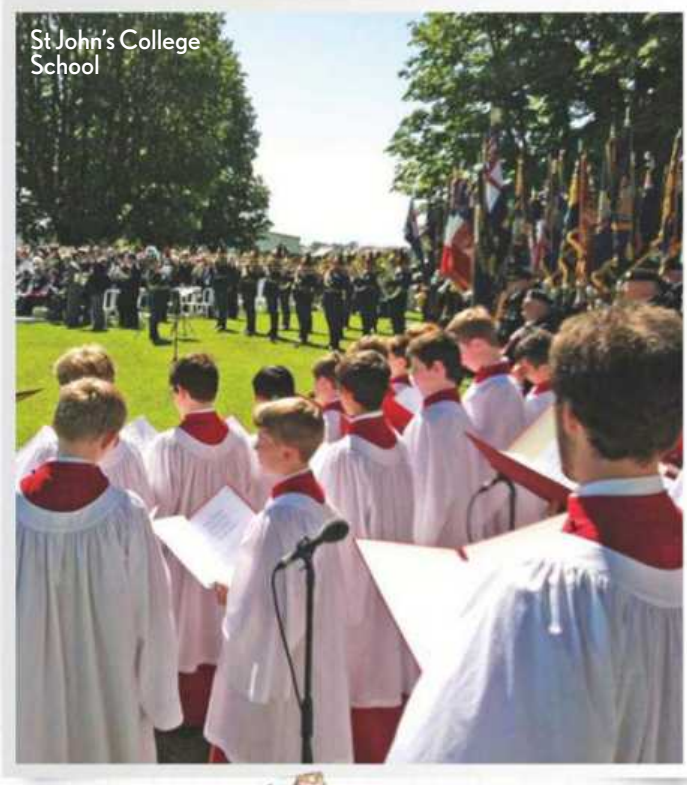
Head Peter Phillips – ebullient, straight-talking – has S. Anselm's abuzz. He's hoicked up teaching standards and injected a dose of humour: picture S. Anselm's Day on his lawn, with medieval knights and jesters. Numbers are up – so much so that there is two-form entry in reception for the first time this year; flexi-boarding beds are being snapped up in record time, and everybody loves the new Sunday roast, attended by parents and pupils. Last year, swimming and rugby were flying, ditto the music scene, with its brass, wind and swing ensembles and ever-popular Friday ukulele club. Leavers duly won places to Repton, Shrewsbury and Uppingham but, as of this September, the school will take pupils through to the age of 16 (something Mr Phillips instituted at Cundall Manor). We bet many will want to stay put: our spy said, 'I would send my children there in a shot. I almost cried when I left.'

St John's College School

Grange Road, Cambridge
CB3 9AA

Website sjcs.co.uk
Head Kevin Jones Pupils 457 day and boarding: 268 boys, 189 girls Faith C of E Ages 4–13 Term fees Day: £4,700; boarding: £7,423

Head Kevin Jones, a former *Tatler* Schools Award winner, is constantly piloting exciting, modern initiatives long before everyone else jumps on the bandwagon – My Mind and Loving Kindness are the latest, an ingenious concoction of teaching mindfulness, philosophy and study skills. They have Wonder Afternoons here too, to reflect and just chill out, really; as an insider says, Mr Jones is 'more than just a good headmaster'. Over the past few years, St John's has undergone a multimillion-pound development, and it now has a supersmart-campus feel (no peeling paint here). Poetry is a big feature – 'We are the only school I know that has a head of poetry,' muses Mr Jones. Rugby (U9) and cricket (U10A) teams had unbeaten seasons last year, and leavers won a smashing 21 scholarships, to Millfield, the Leys and Uppingham, to name a few. St John's is resourceful, sleek and spot-on.


St John's College School

St Richard's School

Bredenbury Court, Bromyard, Herefordshire HR7 4TD

Website st-richards.org.uk
Head Fred de Falbe Pupils 126 day and boarding: 52 boys, 74 girls Faith RC Ages 3–13 Term fees Day: £4,630; boarding: £6,880

Fred 'Mr Fab' de Falbe is making St Richard's much bigger rivals sit up and take notice. We don't often hear about prep-school children listening to Shostakovich at the Birmingham Symphony Hall, or having Family Fast Days, when it's imagined that the dining hall has been destroyed and the sports hall has become a refugee camp (soup was served in 'shocked silence', we're told). There are plenty of more regular school activities here too. The cross-country runners trounced the opposition at the national championships. There are nine different orchestral and choral groups, and another bumper crop of scholarships. Mr de Falbe describes his pupils' deep pride in being 'a bit offbeat... they're a trusty band of characters who know how to get the most out of life'. Our spy's verdict: 'Going from strength to strength.'

Winchester House School

High Street, Brackley, Northamptonshire NN13 7AZ

Website winchester-house.org
Head Emma Goldsmith Pupils 325 day and boarding: 194 boys, 131 girls Faith C of E Ages 3–13 Term fees Day: £5,920; boarding: £7,495

Head Emma Goldsmith's creative curriculum is flourishing; a 'tinker shed' is the latest addition – a charming, rustic nook to create bits and pieces, from simple toys to complex robots; pupils are awarded 'keys to the shed' for excellent work in science and technology. Leavers move on to Marlborough, Wycombe Abbey and Rugby, and won scholarships to Harrow and Wellington last year. The spanking-new ski club schusses off to Milton Keynes weekly, and the girls' Junior A hockey team had an unbeaten season (helped, no doubt, by the new, state-of-the-art Astroturf). There's increased demand for weekly- and flexi-boarding – over 100 children taking the plunge and loving it. The 'opt-in' weekends are a hoot, with paintballing, trips to theme parks and roaring up the Thames in a RIB. What larks.

Witham Hall School

Witham on the Hill, Bourne, Lincolnshire PE10 0JJ

Website withamhall.com
Head Charles Welch Pupils 250 day and boarding: 140 boys, 110 girls Faith C of E Ages 4–13 Term fees Day: £4,825; boarding: £6,470

'What you do outside the classroom drives what goes on in the classroom,' says Charlie Welch. So at Witham, everyone gets to play competitive sport regardless of ability, and if you audition for a play, they'll find you a part. Pastoral care is 'second to none', says a mother; the flexi-boarding is 'brilliant' and 'there are clubs coming out of your ears'. Pupils can do an after-school club every night and stay for supper, at no extra cost. And ('YAY!') all prep is done at school. 'Steph the chef' is legendary, as are her homemade doughnuts. Mr Welch was a protégé of Tony Little at Oakham – 'I've never interviewed someone more passionate about their job,' says our spy. His wife Jo is a star too. Are we the only ones taking bets on their next career step?

LITTLE SIBLINGS

The schools listed below also have prep schools. For their full listings, see the **Midlands Public Schools** section, page 56.

- Bromsgrove
- Ellesmere College
- Moreton Hall
- Norwich School
- Oakham School
- The Perse School
- Stephen Perse Foundation



ILLUSTRATIONS: BOB WILSON/PHOSPHOR ART. BACKGROUND: SHUTTERSTOCK

NORTH & SCOTLAND

Ardvreck

Crieff, Perthshire PH7 4EX 🔵🔴
Website ardvreckschool.co.uk
Head Richard Harvey Pupils 123 day and boarding; 68 boys, 55 girls Faith Inter-denom Ages 3–13 Term fees Day: £4,498; boarding: £6,760

This Perthshire institution is the only full-boarding prep in Scotland and we are glad to report it is in the finest of fettle. 'A fabulous school in a wonderful setting,' says an insider. Ardvreck offers an all-round, outdoorsy education: sledging is almost a daily occurrence in winter and some pupils even climbed Ben Nevis last year. Delightful head Richard Harvey says: 'Ardvreck children are always the first to volunteer and the last to moan.' Pupils are excellent skiers and the U14 Scotland shooting team is composed solely of Ardvreckians. Plus, they have a proper – and properly good – pipe band, who played for the Earl and Countess of Strathearn (that's Will and Kate, in case you didn't know). New science labs are being built and pupils won a terrific 15 scholarships to both southern and northern climes last year. Remember, on Mondays everyone must wear kilts.


Ardvreck

Aysgarth School

Bedale, North Yorkshire DL8 1TF 🔵
Website aysgarthschool.com
Head Rob Morse Pupils 154 boys, all boarding Faith C of E Ages 8–13 Term fees Day: £5,865; boarding: £7,635

Aysgarth's winning formula: all-boys, full-boarding and non-selective. Result: alumni at all the best public schools in the country. Head Anthony Goddard and his wife Caroline ('Mrs G') have retired after 12 years, with Rob and Lottie Morse moving up from Perrott Hill to take over. We are big Morse fans, and trust that they'll quickly learn Aysgarthian quirks like the German Spotlight game. Half of the pupils hail from Yorkshire, but a handful come from London, Lincoln and Lancashire. Everyone lives under one roof, so there's a great sense of community. We were impressed by the fabulous new sports hall; the old hall is now a snazzy performing arts centre. And the rugby 1st XV celebrated an unbeaten season last year. The boys are in no great hurry to get home: 'Sometimes I see my parents rather too much!' said one.


Aysgarth School

Belhaven Hill

Dunbar, East Lothian EH42 1NN 🔵🔴
Website belhavenhill.com
Head Innes MacAskill Pupils 121 day and boarding; 66 boys, 55 girls Faith Inter-denom Ages 7–13 Term fees Day: £5,050; boarding: £7,250

'The smartest, most prestigious prep in Scotland,' says our spy. We love Belhaven for its stunning coastal setting (they play cricket on 'God's Astro' – the beach at low tide), its shortbread and, most of all, for its dream team at the top, Innes and Sandy MacAskill (he's fondly known as Big Mac – not to his face, of course). 'Innes is a hoot,' says one mother; more importantly, he's a stickler for good manners and has excellent links with all the big senior schools in England and Scotland. Everyone boards for the final two years – dorms are warm and recently refurbished (pocket-sprung mattresses *partout*), and we're told that pastoral care 'is second to none'. Their sports teams are pretty much invincible, and last year's CE results were the best ever, with 40 per cent of the year group winning scholarships.

Cargilfield School

Gamekeeper's Road, Edinburgh EH4 6HU 🔵🔴
Website cargilfield.com
Head Rob Taylor Pupils 307 day and boarding; 183 boys, 124 girls Faith C of S Ages 3–13 Term fees Day: £4,940; boarding: £6,065

Rob Taylor, formerly of Harrow, has completed his first year as head of Scotland's oldest prep and has brilliant news to report: success in national rugby, netball and hockey competitions; 18 scholarships to senior schools won; and £6,000 raised for charity by a bracing walk in the Pentlands. Cargilfield also scored numerous wins at the national Schools' Handwriting Competition; details matter here – note the immaculate grounds and strict uniform. This is a homely place where the traditional (an open fire in the library) sits alongside the modern (underfloor heating in the changing rooms).

Photograph by HUGO BURNAND



BELHAVEN HILL

ILLUSTRATIONS: BOB WILSON/PHOSPHOR ART. BACKGROUND: SHUTTERSTOCK



DID YOU KNOW?

509 Cundall Manor pupils and family members recently broke the record for the world's largest-ever hockey lesson

Pupils get busy making jewellery, cooking, Highland dancing and sailing, and each week the house with the most achievements gets a chocolate cake. Edinburgh parents rave about the 'flawless' flexi-boarding system and we hear the touchline is the most glamorous north of the border.

Cundall Manor School

Cundall, North Yorkshire YO61 2RW ●●

Website cundallmanorschool.com
Heads Amanda Kirby and John Sample
Pupils 327 day and boarding: 175 boys, 152 girls Faith C of E Ages 2½–16 Term fees Day: £4,808; boarding: £7,811

'It's a school that lets children be children,' says a father. 'Climb trees, have fun and learn at the same time.' We've been keeping an eye on Cundall since the abrupt departure of former head Richard Notman, but deputies Amanda Kirby and John Sample stepped up to share the headship and are doing tremendously. 'No loss of momentum,' confirms an insider. Cundall brought in a full-boarding option last year but, says the school, 'we're primarily a day school with opportunities' – so Saturday-morning school isn't compulsory. There's still a gentle air of eccentricity about the place: the homemade-go-kart races, the Creme Egg flinging with trebuchets, the full-school outing to the seaside. The school won an ISA award for sporting achievement last year; pupils love hockey on the new Astro – and the food, 'especially Bird Seed'. You'll have to ask them.

Mowden Hall School

Newton, Stocksfield, Northumberland NE43 7TP ●●

Website mowdenhall.co.uk
Head Neal Bailey Pupils 164 day and boarding: 81 boys, 83 girls Faith Non-denom Ages 3–13 Term fees Day: £5,720; boarding: £7,410

Head Neal Bailey and wife Nici are well ensconced at Mowden Hall. The only struggle has been the climate change; the Baileys were at Sauveterre, the Cothill Trust's outpost near Toulouse, where all Mowdenites spend a term. Mowden is thriving: three pupils qualified for the National Prep School Athletics Championships; a West End set was hired for a thrilling production of *Return to the Forbidden Planet*; new appointments are boosting the staff room; and leavers skipped off to Ampleforth, Oundle and Queen Margaret's, many with scholarships. This is a hearty, rural place with 50 acres for its confident, charming pupils to roam. Applications are up, particularly since the addition of a new 'chalet-style' nursery wing. Boarding can be full, weekly or flexi, but the weekend programme is so cracking that no one wants to leave and miss out on all the fun.



Queen Mary's School

Baldersby Park, Topcliffe, North Yorkshire YO7 3BZ ●

Website queenmarys.org
Head Carole Cameron Pupils 255 girls, day and boarding Faith C of E Ages 2–16 Term fees Day: £5,645; boarding: £7,340

Queen Mary's, a new addition to our guide, is a local hero. It's small and nurturing, and suits girls who love the outdoors. 'They encourage them not to be prissy,' we're told. 'They keep them young but free to be themselves.' So, wild swimming in the river or learning to pluck a pheasant are par for the course, and Queen Mary's regularly produces county hockey and netball players. New head Carole Cameron starts this term; previously she was at Queen Margaret's, where everyone loved her. The school goes up to 16 (49.2 per cent A*–A at GCSE last year); a cohort leave at 11+ and 13+ for Sedbergh, Uppingham and St Peter's, but demand for Year 7 places is high and they easily fill up the year group again. Boarding is very flexible and there are strong links with Aysgarth. We also hear the chapel choir is fabulous – and available for weddings.



Cundall Manor School

St Martin's Ampleforth

Gilling Castle, Gilling East, York YO62 4HP ●●

Website stmartins.ampleforth.org.uk
Head Mark O'Donnell Pupils 170 day

The mighty nose awards 2016

Can you smell that? There is a whiff of competition on the air. The Fragrance Foundation invites pupils aged 7-11 to write the most pongy poetry possible

MEET MARTY

HAILING FROM A FARAWAY LAND, SMELL-FINDER-IN-CHIEF MARTY TRACKS DOWN ALL THE WHIFFS, SNIFFS, STENCHES AND PONGS FOR HIS TRIBE. HE SMELLS NEAR AND FAR, FILLING HIS NOSE WITH EVERY SMELLABLE AROMA. NOW HE NEEDS YOUR HELP TO FIND MORE STINKS AND DESCRIBE THEM...



HAVE SOME SCENTS AND START SCRIBBLING

If you're aged seven to eleven (or know someone who is), keep reading. The Mighty Nose Awards, brought to you by the Fragrance Foundation, is back again. And we're a little excited. This year, the judging panel is headed by actor – and fragrance fan – Richard E Grant, with Josh Lacey, author of the *Dragonsitter* series, and Nicky Cox MBE, editor of *First News*. Think of this as the scratch and sniff of the literary world – the judges want their nostrils filled with the heady aroma of creativity. They want poems. Smell-inspired poems. And the best part? You can be as bonkers as you like. What does a spaceship smell like? Or a giant's shoe? You could imagine the conversation between two odours or recall your earliest smelly memory. Poems don't have to rhyme and entries will be judged on originality, lively depiction of smells and quality of writing.



Richard E Grant

THE FRAGRANCE FOUNDATION

TO ENTER For entry information, visit **martythemightynose.org** now! You can submit poems – by post or email – from now until 30 November 2015. Winners will be awarded prizes at none other than BAFTA in March 2016. Don't forget to send your contact details with your entry so The Fragrance Foundation can get in touch with you. Good luck!



and boarding: 108 boys, 62 girls Faith RC Ages 3–13 Term fees Day: £4,893, boarding: £7,361

Head Mark O'Donnell describes St Martin's Ampleforth as '*Swallows and Amazons* meets Hogwarts' – in other words, it's pretty much paradise. St Martin's is the prep for Ampleforth College – to which the large majority of pupils head – and it shares many things with its 'big brother': the Catholic/Benedictine ethos; the sense of community; traditional boarding values; and a mega 3,000 acres. A new equestrian and dance centre is planned for the campus, along with an outdoor curriculum, featuring a 'forest school', to make the most of those extensive grounds. St Martin's were runners- up at the Rosslyn Park Schools Sevens last year and skiing is a new sport – Mr O'Donnell runs the IAPS Ski Championships. There is also a strong choral tradition. Boarding is at capacity and availability operates on a word-of-mouth basis. There are lots of French and Spanish families, as well as landed locals.



St Mary's Melrose

Abbey Park, Melrose TD6 9LN ●●

Website stmarysmelrose.org.uk Head Liam Harvey Pupils 190 day and boarding: 97 boys, 93 girls Faith Inter-denom Ages 2–13 Term fees Day: £4,897; boarding: £5,697

St Mary's Bang Goes the Borders science festival is a real hit: more than 1,000 people flocked to the school last year to make liquid-nitrogen ice cream and watch the Scab in a Cup show (it's all about blood cells). The mastermind behind it all is head Liam Harvey, who has overseen the school's growing reputation, a facilities overhaul and increasing numbers – old classrooms are back in action once more. Last year, leavers won scholarships to Glenalmond and Fettes, but pupils are homing in on Winchester and Eton too. Boarding is weekly or flexi; a 'boarders' blog' keeps parents in the loop and the star of the show is Chef – a fan of local produce and baking bread and creator of fabulous match teas. St Mary's are Scottish prep cross-country champions and the rugby is smashing – sevens was invented in Melrose, after all.

Terrington Hall

Terrington, York, North Yorkshire YO60 6PR ●●

Website terringtonhall.com Head Stephen Mulryne Pupils 155 day and boarding: 88 boys, 67 girls Faith C of E Ages 3–13 Term fees Day: £4,350; boarding: £6,180

Former deputy Stephen Mulryne is already making his mark as the top man at this Yorkshire prep: blazers must be donned when arriving at or leaving school; church every Monday is compulsory; and a 'mantra of the week' has been introduced. There's also a new director of performing arts, adding even more pizzazz to productions – *The Hobbit* and *Little Red Riding Hood* last year. Terrington's idyllic grounds are home to speedy cross-country runners, unbeaten U13 netballers and the enormously fun Great Terrington Camp-Out. Leavers left for 15 different senior schools last year, some with scholarships – sterling work, given the school's size and broad intake. There is 'modern boarding' here (aka flexi), but they aim to entice more full-timers and day pupils can stay for £15 a night – more fun than a babysitter.



Terrington Hall

LITTLE SIBLINGS

The schools listed below also have prep schools. For their full listings, see the **North & Scotland Public Schools** section, page 64.

- Fettes ●●
- Giggleswick ●●
- Gordonstoun ●●
- Kilgraston ●●
- The King's School, Chester ●●
- Lathallan School ●●
- Loretto ●●
- Merchiston Castle School ●
- Robert Gordon's College ●●
- St George's School for Girls ●
- St Leonards School ●●
- St Peter's School ●●
- Sedbergh ●●
- Withington Girls' School ●

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Kit out your kids with all the best kit. Oh, and treat yourself too... By Mariella Tandy

THE IT LIST



JACKET, £780; DRESS, £256, BOTH BY **RALPH LAUREN**

WAY OUT WEST

Be warned. Severe outfit envy may occur if you choose to buy these **Ralph Lauren** clothes for your daughter. The tassels on the suede fringed jacket and the little checked dress will find that latent cowgirl within and release her with an almighty, 'YEE-HAAAAA!' *ralphlauren.com*



Picture perfect

If your child is sick of you chasing after it with your iPhone shouting, 'Just one more picture, darling!', then make a booking at **Nousha**. Its professional photo sessions will have you showing off the results to everyone. *nousha.co.uk*

Baby Bjorn is doing its, frankly mandatory, baby carriers in limited-edition pastel colours, so snap one up pronto before they vanish. Which they will. *johnlewis.com*

£120, BY **BABY BJORN**





TONING LOTION, £31; HAND CREAM, £31, BOTH BY **BONPOINT**

MOTHER NOSE BEST

You know when you go into **Bonpoint** and think, 'I wish I could smell like this shop'? Well, now you can, with these lotions. Clever and thoughtful Bonpoint. *bonpoint.com*

Really wild

Giraffes and T-shirts. It's a dream combination. And that's before we mention that the shirt in question is from the **Paul Smith** stable – which can only make it an even sweeter proposition. *paulsmith.co.uk*



£34, BY **PAUL SMITH**



£295, BY **THOMAS LYTE**

OFF THE SHOULDER

Immerse yourself in the joy of old skool with a **Thomas Lyte** leather and canvas satchel. They come in lots of colours and have room for all the important things in life – laptops, files, pens, sweets, catapults AND your pet frog. Quite the thing for new school (see what we did there?). *thomaslyte.com*



£78, BY **SIMONETTA**

There's not much that can improve on scarlet cashmere, but **Simonetta** shows that sequins and a bow is an excellent start. We've never longed for cold more. *simonettashop.com*

*You need to sign up to **Little Circle** immediately. That's an order, soldier. It's been put together by a pair of fashion editors, and is THE place to find perfect presents AND resell your children's clothes. Win, win and win. littlecircle.co.uk*

STILL-LIFE: JODY TODD

SPECIAL DELIVERY

Yes, you love your baby, but that was NOT easy or nice

1

HEY, YOU PUSHED A HUMAN OUT OF YOUR BODY. THE LEAST YOU DESERVE IS THIS **PATEK PHILIPPE** LADIES' CALATRAVA WATCH.



£18,870, AT **PATEK.COM**



2

WAIT. HOW DID THAT BABY GET THERE??? WHY IS IT CRYING?? CALM YOUR NERVES WITH THIS **BAUME & MERCIER** PROMESSE ROSE- AND WHITE-GOLD WATCH.

£3,250, AT **BAUME-ET-MERCIER.COM**



POA, AT **BOODLES.COM**

3

YOU KNOW HOW THE SAYING GOES – GIVE BIRTH, GET DIAMONDS. WE RECOMMEND THESE MAYMAY STUDS FROM **BOODLES**. YOU EARNED THEM.



BURBERRY CHILDREN A/W 2015

It's phat

The thing about this **Burberry** puffer jacket is that it is SO luscious your child will probably prefer it to their duvet. They'll be clamouring for winter to start and, once they've put it on, they'll refuse to ever take it off again. *alexandalexa.com*



£170, BY **BURBERRY**



£700, BY **UPPABABY**

*The problem with babies is that they expect to be wheeled around everywhere. Thank goodness for clever **Uppababy**, whose Vista pram can carry one, two or even three small people. Extremely helpful. johnlewis.com*



£65, BY **MARIE CHANTAL**

READY, TEDDY, GO

Who in this world can resist a tiny bear? The velour fur. The snuggly hood with the ears. Wrap your own little creature in this **Marie Chantal** baby suit. *fancykids.com*

Screen saviour

Children can become menacingly territorial about other people's tablets – namely their parents' – so perhaps it's time to end their reign of terror and reclaim your freedom with the Surface Pro 3 from **Microsoft**. Brilliant for students, it has clever things like digital inking and is going down an absolute storm in classrooms. Chances are, the tables will turn and it'll be you banging on your child's door saying, 'I only want to borrow it for 10 minutes.' *microsoft.com/surface*



FROM £639, BY **MICROSOFT**



£295, BY **ARMANI**



ARMANI JUNIOR A/W 2015

That's a wrap

A spectacular coat from the king of tailoring, **Armani**. For a CHILD. Why do these people get all the breaks? Do they know how lucky they are? It's SO UNFAIR *slams door*. *harrods.com*

£10, BY **MONSOON**



PAMPER THOSE PAWS

We can all agree that baby koalas are adorable. But let's take this to the next level – baby-koala mittens by **Monsoon**. For babies. Teeny, cosy little hands that look like koalas *dies*. *monsoon.co.uk*

SO BLOOMIN' LOVELY

Pink to make the boys wink. Such is the power of a pink party dress, especially one that comes with appliquéd flowers in a **Galliano** style. *johngalliano.com*



£238, BY **JOHN GALLIANO**

THE IT LIST



FROM £40, BY **MONOGRAMMED LINEN SHOP**

The only way to improve on a pillow embroidered with Mary Poppins is to add a name too. *monogrammedlinenshop.com*



BABY DIOR WINTER 2015



£960, BY **DIOR**

Make sure your child is the best-dressed skier on any mountain in the world this season. Needless to say, **Dior** is responsible for this ski jacket of dreams. *harrods.com*

Calling all small cats. Your shoes have arrived, in the form of these black-satin flats with the signature **Charlotte Olympia** CAT FACE on them. Attend parties in them with cat-like tread. *harveynichols.com*

£325, BY **CHARLOTTE OLYMPIA**



RUB-A-DUB-DUB

Best for bottoms, baths and barnets

1 GOOD OLD **SOPHIE LE GIRAFFE**. THIS PROTECTS DELICATE BABY SKIN AND WORKS PARTICULARLY WELL AS A NAPPY CREAM FOR THE SOFTEST BOTTOMS.



£15, BY **SOPHIE LE GIRAFFE**, AT **BOOTS.COM**

£4, AT **CHILDS FARM.COM**



2 WASH, CONDITION AND DETANGLE AFTER SWIMMING WITH THIS **CHILDS FARM** THREE-IN-ONE SHAMPOO. NO TEARS FOR ANYONE, INCLUDING YOU.

£25.50, AT **LITTLE BUTTERFLY ORGANIC.COM**



3 THIS **LITTLE BUTTERFLY ORGANIC** BATH MILK, RICH IN ESSENTIAL OILS, WILL SET EVEN THE MOST SLEEPLESS CHILD DREAMING.

DEBRETT'S & TATLER
SCHOOL OF ETIQUETTE

INTRODUCING THE NEW DEBRETT'S AND TATLER SCHOOL OF ETIQUETTE

Modern life can be confusing. What does 'smart casual' even mean? Do you really have to leave a tip for the butler on the bedside table? But we know the answers to these questions, and we also understand the power of good manners – so we have partnered with the Debrett's Training Academy to create five unique, comprehensive and fun etiquette courses.

COMING OF AGE (AGES 13–16)
For your belligerent teen – including how to make the right first impression, be a good guest and manage digital profiles.

FINISHING SCHOOL
Give your school leaver a head start – including how to nail that interview, dress appropriately and network with charm.

BEST OF BRITISH
Crack the British social code – including the art of small talk, dining etiquette and the history and rules of the Season.

STYLE AND THE SEASON
From white-tie balls to the Royal Enclosure at Ascot, the dressing rules that will make sure you look great – and fit in.

HOSTING AND ENTERTAINMENT
Hosting a dinner party? Your child's 21st? Or have you been invited to Balmoral? Whether you're hosting or being hosted, this is the course for you.

ONE- AND TWO-DAY COURSES. FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT TIM HENCKENS ON 020 7290 5950 OR AT TIMHENCKENS@DEBRETTS.CO.UK, OR VISIT DEBRETTS.COM/DT-SCHOOL-OF-ETIQUETTE



PHOTOGRAPH: KRISTIAN SCHULLER



FAMILY ESCAPE

Situated in the heart of London, a mere hop, skip and a jump from Hyde Park, Buckingham Palace and the National Portrait Gallery, the Jumeirah Carlton Tower is the perfect base from which to explore the city. With the family escape package, children receive a personalised cookie on arrival, plus goggles for the swimming pool. There is also a delightful treasure trail of the surrounding area.
jumeirah.com



COUNTRY AIR

COWORTH PARK IS SET IN THE ROLLING COUNTRYSIDE OF PICTURESQUE BERKSHIRE, AN IDEAL LOCATION FOR A FAMILY ESCAPE. THE COWORTH KIDS PROGRAMME HAS A HUGE RANGE OF OUTDOORSY ACTIVITIES TO KEEP LITTLE ONES ROSY-CHEEKED AND HAPPY – FROM TREASURE HUNTS AND DUCK FEEDING TO MINI OLYMPICS. FUN!
dorchestercollection.com

FULL-ON FUN AT HALF-TERM

The Dorchester – situated slap-bang in the middle of London's buzzy Mayfair – is a pretty magical place, for parents and children alike. Little ones will be enchanted by the Mad Hatter tea party during October half-term, an *Alice in Wonderland* spin on the traditional afternoon tea to celebrate 150 years of Lewis Carroll's classic. The English National Ballet School's young dancers will make appearances as the Mad Hatter, the Dormouse, the March Hare and Alice herself to prance and pirouette amongst the tables, while guests scoff Wonderland-themed cakes. Another draw is bedtime (believe it or not). Here, the new glamping for kids turns hotel rooms into chic dens. Tents in Beatrix Potter-patterned fabric cover children's beds and feature a personalised sign. Expect smiles all round.
dorchestercollection.com

FAMILY FRIENDLY

You want a breather, your children want non-stop excitement. Sound familiar? Our round-up of amazing holidays will ensure a harmonious household. From city jaunts to beach escapes to action-packed adventures, these are memories in the making...



OFF THE ROAD

PUT YOUR CHILDREN IN THE DRIVING SEAT...

GIVE BUDDING RACERS A THRILL WITH THE LANDROVER OFF-ROAD DRIVING EXPERIENCE FOR 11-17 YEAR OLDS. ALL VEHICLES ARE FITTED WITH DUAL CONTROLS AND A HIGHLY SKILLED INSTRUCTOR WILL INTRODUCE YOUR YOUNGSTER TO THE CHALLENGES OF ROUGH-TERRAIN DRIVING, FROM STEERING, BRAKING, REVERSING AND SLALOM SKILLS TO CROSSING RIDGES AND DITCHES. THIS IS A FABULOUS OPPORTUNITY FOR KIDS TO GET BEHIND THE WHEEL. 30, 60 AND 90-MINUTE LESSONS ARE AVAILABLE. BUCKLE UP!

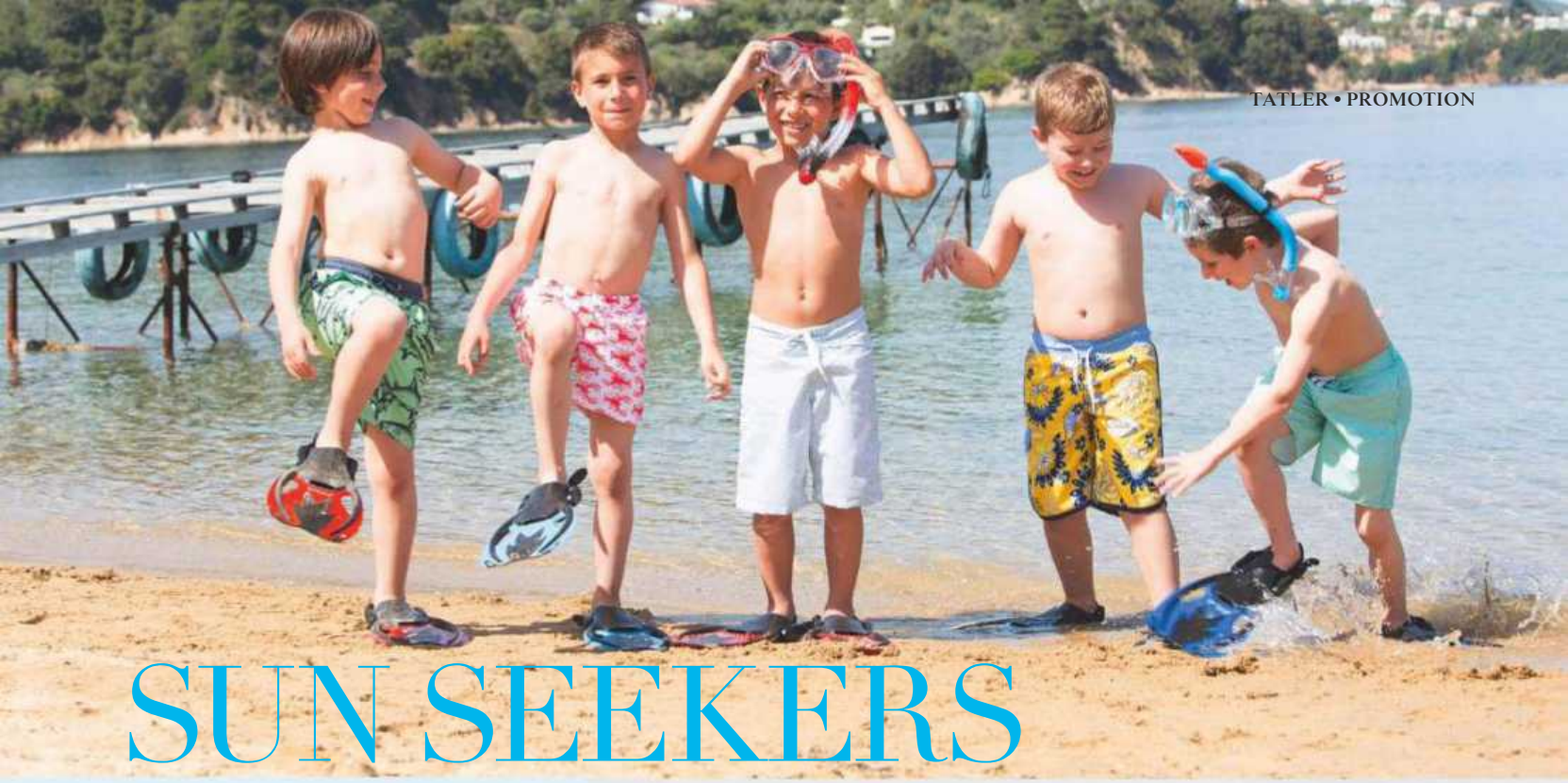
startoff-road.com

CAT'S PYJAMAS

At the Savoy, children are well and truly spoilt with their very own robes and slippers, in-room activities and Kaspar the Cat toys on arrival. What's more, families can enjoy 50% off a second room, complimentary breakfast, dining for children under five and a family pass to the London Aquarium.
fairmont.com/savoy-london

TEEN TIME

Surly teenager on your hands? Fret not. The Corinthia in London has plenty of ideas to keep even the most unenthusiastic family member entertained. Their Crafty Concierge Facebook page showcases a selection of unique – predominantly London-based activities for the savvy teen. Carefully curated to feature all the recent happenings, the page has promotions aplenty and links for booking events. From street art tours and white water rafting centres to rooftop cinemas, this is *insider* London. Definite cool points.
corinthia.com



SUN SEEKERS

Want a treat for the whole family? The Skiathos Princess Resort in the Greek islands has all the ingredients for happy holiday memories

Located on the pristine beaches of Aghia Paraskevi on the Greek island of Skiathos, the Skiathos Princess Resort is an Aegean paradise for all. With tranquil blue waters, elegant accommodation and a swanky spa, you'll be begging to extend your stay. So will your children. There's plenty to keep them amused here.

Two kids' clubs, maintained to OFSTED standards, care for and entertain children aged six months to 12 years. From beach games and nature walks to craft workshops and singing, these clubs have chock-a-block activity programmes. And if you happen to be on holiday with a slightly less enthusiastic teenager, fret not. They'll relish the freedom of hanging out at the resort's beach and ordering fresh smoothies from the bar. Or perhaps trying some watersports – windsurfing, banana boating, kayaking – in the harbour of the nearby village of Skiathos.

Plus, there are plenty of day excursions that *all* ages can enjoy. How about a boat trip to discover the island's secluded beaches? Take time to snorkel in the crystal-clear waters, before tucking into a delicious lunch whipped up by your on-board chef. Or why not try your hand at sailing? Then you'll really have worked up an appetite for the fresh seafood at the hotel's beachside restaurant Pr Ammos. Do you hear that? It's the sound of no one complaining. Pack your bags for true peace and fun in the sun.



For more information and reservations, please call +30 24270 49731 or visit santikoscollection.com

ON A HIGH

LOOKING FOR A JAM-PACKED ADVENTURE? POWDER BYRNE HAS JUST LAUNCHED ITS LATEST ITINERARY IN INTREPID TRAVEL – AN ACTIVITY-BASED HOLIDAY IN THE DOLOMITES IN ITALY. FROM MOUNTAIN BIKING AND WHITE WATER RAFTING TO HORSE TREKKING AND HIKING IN THE BRAIES-SENNES-FANES NATURE PARK, THIS IS A TRIP YOUR KIDS WILL NEVER FORGET.
powderbyrne.com

GREEK GETAWAY

SANTIKOS HOTELS (LOCATED IN SKIATHOS, ALONISSOS AND PILIO IN MAGNIFICENT GREECE) HAVE A NEW ACTIVITY ON OFFER THAT KIDS WILL BE BEGGING TO TRY. IS IT YOGA? IS IT SURFING? IT'S YOGAQUA! A FRESH AND EXCITING FITNESS TREND THAT ORIGINATED IN LOS ANGELES AND FOCUSES ON A COMBINATION OF TRADITIONAL YOGA EXERCISES AND STAND-UP PADDLE-BOARDING. YOUR LITTLE WATER BABIES WILL LOVE IT! AVAILABLE TO CHILDREN AGED SEVEN AND OLDER.
santikoscollection.com



SAIL AWAY



Y.CO provide chartered yachts in some of the world's most stunning destinations. South of France? The Caribbean? Exploring becomes that bit easier with your own yacht. A fully equipped crew enables you to enjoy a stress-free life on the ocean blue. And now with a children's tutor available for all ages, revision can be plain sailing too. Headed up by Louisa Gamon, a lively and fun Cambridge graduate, the on-board lessons cover everything from culture and history to the day-to-day lifestyle of the country you're visiting. The Y.CO tutor programme also offers academic tutoring for any age in any subject and preparation for entrance exams. So your children will be light years ahead after the holidays. Perfect!
Y.CO

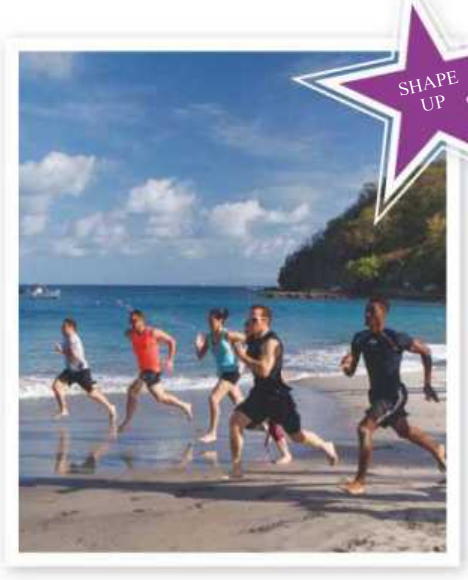
WILD WILD WEST

The life of the cowboy perfectly captures our idea of freedom and adventure. Wide open plains, endless sky, and nothing but the sound of hooves or the call of an eagle to disturb the peace. If you and your children fancy an adventure on the range, Mustang Monument in Nevada, USA, is the spot for you. This 900-square mile luxury eco-resort and wild mustang reserve in north-east Nevada epitomises escapism. Sleep in tipis or pretty cottages, pull up a stool at an authentic saloon, and of course, hop in the saddle. Equine challenges are tailored to all abilities from sedate wagon trails to thundering gallops. Go off road on a 4x4 expedition, try calf-roping and spend evenings around campfires, under the stars, telling tales. Magic.
mustangmonument.com



RUN FOR IT

Well Fit Families is a family-based fitness week designed around the beach, at The Body Holiday in Saint Lucia. Run, bike, swim and abseil your way to happy exhaustion with classes the whole family will enjoy. Work up a sweat and have fun doing it – we can think of nothing better.
thebodyholiday.com



KIDS ONLY

The people at One&Only resort in Le Saint Géran, Mauritius sure know the way to a child's heart. They have dedicated clubs for children and teens with a whole host of activities. Plus, a junior spa with bespoke mini treatments (any girl will love the pampering spa princess package). And unlimited complimentary water sports. Your children will never want to leave!
susiefreemantravel.com

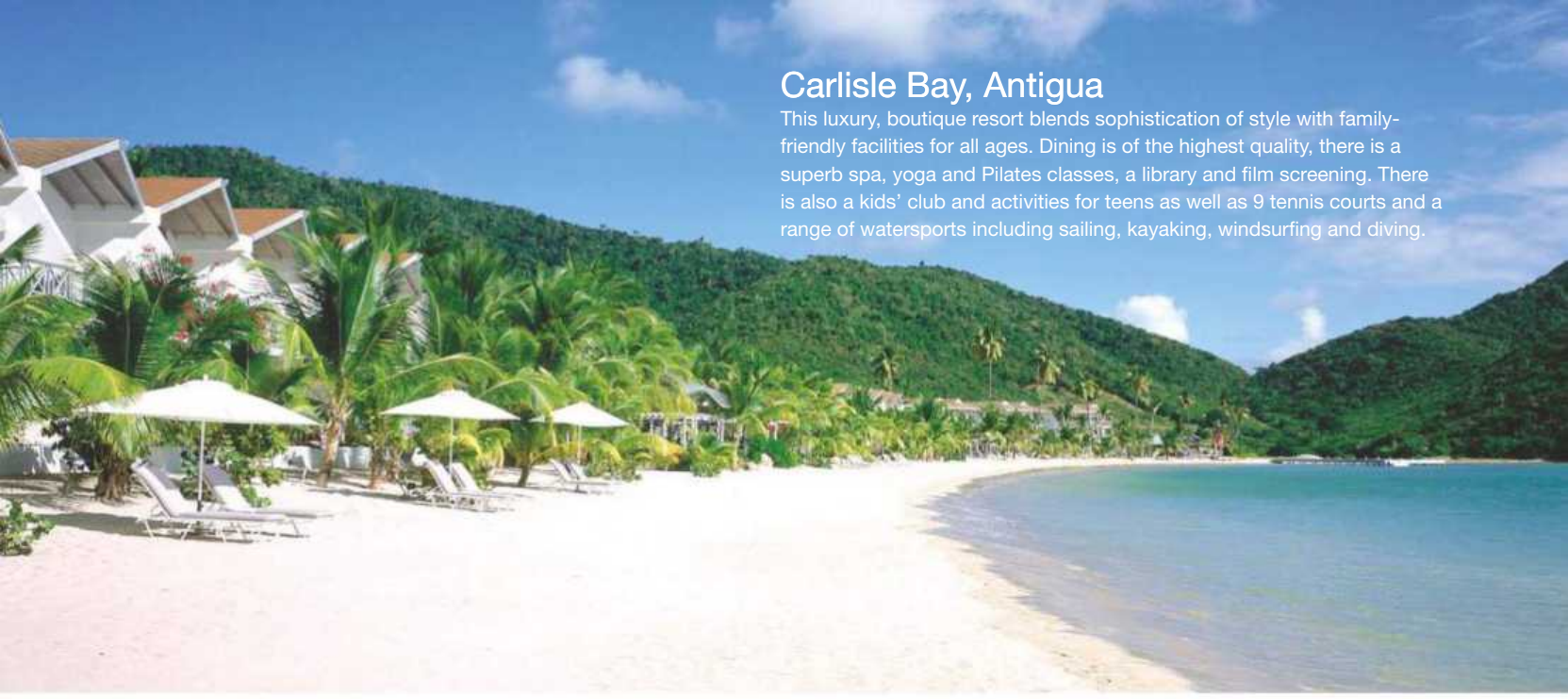
SNORKEL PARADISE

Crystal-clear water teeming with exotic marine life. Hundreds of shipwrecks to be explored. It's no wonder Bermuda is touted as the world's best snorkelling destination for children. Head to Snorkel Park Beach for a fun and safe coral reef adventure.
gotobermuda.co.uk



SNOW WONDER

AT SCOTT DUNN, THEY BRING THE FUN WITH ACTION-PACKED KIDS CLUBS FOR ENERGETIC TOTS. FANCY HITTING THE SLOPES? THE EXPLORERS KIDS' CLUB IS AVAILABLE EXCLUSIVELY FOR GUESTS STAYING AT LE PORTETTA AND PORTETTA LODGES IN COURCHEVAL MORIOND, FRANCE. FROM MAKING SNOWGLOBES AND PENGUIN MODELS TO EXPLORING OUTSIDE ON TOBOGGANS – IT'S NON-STOP EXCITEMENT!
scottdunn.com



Carlisle Bay, Antigua

This luxury, boutique resort blends sophistication of style with family-friendly facilities for all ages. Dining is of the highest quality, there is a superb spa, yoga and Pilates classes, a library and film screening. There is also a kids' club and activities for teens as well as 9 tennis courts and a range of watersports including sailing, kayaking, windsurfing and diving.

THE ART OF INTELLIGENT TRAVEL ORGANISING

Expressions Holidays has been organising tailor-made holidays since 1989. Each holiday to selected luxury hotels and resorts in Europe and further afield is handcrafted to meet the individual requirements of our clients. We offer the very best beach resorts with luxurious accommodation and numerous activities but also multi-centre touring holidays in selected destinations such as Italy, France, Sri Lanka and Vietnam as well as holidays with an educational theme including cookery and archaeology.



Forte Village Resort, Sardinia

This private, gated, traffic-free resort offers a choice of 8 four and five star hotels situated amid beautiful gardens alongside a white sand beach. There are family rooms sleeping up to five people. Facilities for families are outstanding with kids' clubs, go-karting and bowling and sports academies including Chelsea FC, tennis, dancing and biking.

Expressions

expressionsholidays.co.uk tel 01752 878065

ABTA

A NEW WAVE

Feel like getting out on the water? The wind in your hair? Beaches Resorts have recently launched a new sailing programme at their Turks & Caicos and Jamaica destinations in association with the American Sailing Association. This new 'sailing fun' experience is an eight-hour course designed to introduce both children (over eight) and adults to the sport. Fun holiday ahoy!
beachesresorts.co.uk

CREATIVE KIDS

Located in magnificent Bali, Mulia Resort is paradise perfection with white sand and turquoise water. But should children tire of beach activities, there is plenty more to keep them amused here (and give parents some sun lounger time). Kids will love getting crafty with everything from hair braiding and Balinese dress up to origami and flower arranging.
themulia.com

COOL CLUB

Nestled beside Crete's dazzling Elounda beach, the exclusive Elouda Gulf Villas & Suites is a family-run boutique resort with a fantastic kids programme. The brand-new Cool Crèche and Cool Kids Club include a state-of-the-art playground, a Greek and Mediterranean inspired kids' lunch club menu, and the chance for your little ones to get their first introduction to the Greek myths. Cool, cultured and custom-made for kids.
eloundavillas.com



THE CANARY KID...

THE GRAN HOTEL BAHÍA DEL DUQUE RESORT & SPA, LOCATED ON THE ISLAND OF TENERIFE, OFFERS A RANGE OF ACTIVITIES FROM THE KIDS' DUQUI CLUB AND TEEN LOUNGE TO BOARD GAMES, VIDEO GAMES AND TREASURE HUNTS, TO KEEP YOUR LITTLE AMIGOS ENTERTAINED.
bahia-duque.com

LAP OF THE GODS

A stone's throw from the sparkling Ionian Sea, Costa Navarino is located in the Greek region of Messinia. This Mediterranean resort offers a plethora of child favourites such as the fantastic Aqua Park, playground and indoor sports centre. There are also two specially designed childcare centres with plenty of guided fun and frolics on the beach. Giving you time to relax and rejuvenate in the Anazoe Spa. Bliss.
costanavarino.com



OUT OF THIS WORLD

IMAGINE A PLACE WHERE YOU CAN BREAKFAST WITH YOUR FAMILY IN A PRIVATE POOLSIDE CABANA, SCUBA DIVE IN A LAGOON AND SWIM WITH DOLPHINS. ATLANTIS, THE PALM (DUBAI) SEEMS TO POSSESS ALL OF THE WORLD'S EARTHLY DELIGHTS UNDER ONE CLEAR, BLUE SKY. THERE ARE MORE THAN 20 INCREDIBLE RESTAURANTS TO CHOOSE FROM AND THE FAMILY SUITE IS PURE COMFORT — PLUS, IT HAS THE NUMBER ONE WATERPARK IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND EUROPE.
elegantresorts.co.uk

SAIL INTO SUMMER



Are you looking for an exciting new hobby for your kids? With calm, blue waters the Anassa hotel in Cyprus boasts some of the best sailing opportunities on the Med. Built on the success of the highly respected Latchi Watersports sailing school, your little seafarers will have great fun learning the skills and techniques necessary to develop confidence and a lifelong passion for sailing.
thanoshotels.com

PERKS OF A PRIVATE VILLA

Handpick your own private luxury villa. From the modern villa to the traditional farmhouse, James Villa Holidays has over 2,700 lovely properties across more than 50 stunning locations, leaving you spoilt for choice. Each villa has its own private pool for your water babies to splash about in. There are also on-site kids' clubs, playgrounds, spas and golf courses, making these holiday resorts the ideal choice for a fun-packed family holiday.
jamesvillas.co.uk

ECO-CHIC

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virginlimitededition.com/en/ulusaba

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travel-unwrapped.com



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mandarinoriental.com

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TATLER'S EDUCATION GUIDE

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REGENT'S PARK

OPEN EVENTS 2015

LEADING INDEPENDENT SCHOOL FOR GIRLS AGED 11-18



Senior School
17th, 25th September
4th, 13th November

Senior Open Evening
1st October 5.30 - 7pm
(no booking required)

Sixth Form Open Evening
8th October 6pm

To reserve a place please contact the Registrar, Mrs Sandy Bailey

registrar@fhs-nw1.org.uk
020 7723 0176
www.francisholland.org.uk
Reg. Charity No 312745

FRANCIS HOLLAND SCHOOL
SLOANE SQUARE

OPEN EVENTS 2015

LEADING INDEPENDENT SCHOOL FOR GIRLS AGED 4 -18

Junior School
28th September
19th October

Senior School
15th, 23rd September
6th, 18th November

Senior Open Evening
8th October 6-8pm
(no booking required)

Sixth Form Open Evening
30th September 6pm

To reserve a place please contact the Registrar, Mrs Fiona Holland



registrar@fhs-sw1.org.uk
020 7730 2971
www.francisholland.org.uk
Reg. Charity No 312745

www.lehs.org.uk

The Lady Eleanor Holles School
HAMPTON, MIDDLESEX

"Pupils' achievements are exceptional"

ISI REPORT 2013



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Registered Charity no 1130254

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email: registrar@lehs.org.uk
Head Mistress: Mrs Heather Hanbury, MA Edinburgh, MSc Cantab
Contact the Registrar or visit www.lehs.org.uk

To advertise contact 020 7499 9080 ext 3705

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COEDUCATIONAL BOARDING & DAY SCHOOL 13-18
Open Mornings
Every Saturday morning by appointment



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OPEN MORNINGS
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Prep School: 10.00am - 12.00 noon
Friday 5 February 2016: Pre-Prep School: 9.15am - 11.00am
Prep School: 10.00am - 12.00 noon



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6th Form Open Evening - Tuesday 22nd September
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AND LITTLE CHEPSTOW NURSERY



CHEPSTOW HOUSE SCHOOL AND LITTLE CHEPSTOW NURSERY



"The quality of teaching is outstanding. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and achievement, so pupils enjoy learning, are focused and make rapid and often outstanding progress." Ofsted Report, Nov 2014

- Co-ed school from Nursery to Year 8
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For further details and registration information
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contact Mrs Linda Farrow in the school office on **020 7243 0243.**

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E: info@chepstowhouseschool.co.uk
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www.kingshouseschool.org

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SCHOOL

Independent co-educational preparatory day school, ages 3-13



Knightsbridge School, 67 Pont Street, London SW1X 0BD
tel: 020 7590 9000 email: enquiries@knightsbridgeschool.com
web: www.knightsbridgeschool.com

KS offers a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum preparing both boys and girls for 8+,11+ and 13+ Common Entrance entry to public day and boarding schools

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Open Mornings

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FOR GIRLS 4-18 YEARS

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CLARENCE LANE, LONDON, SW15 5PY

For further information please contact the Registrar, Miss Catherine Voysey

Tel: 020 8392 5803 email: registrar@ibstockplaceschool.co.uk www.ibstockplaceschool.co.uk

PREP SCHOOL OPEN MORNINGS

Wednesday 23 September 9.30am

Wednesday 18 November 9.30am

To advertise contact 020 7499 9080 ext 3705

TATLER
SCHOOLS LIVE! EVENT
2ND OCTOBER 2015
IN ASSOCIATION WITH Surface
At the Jumeirah Carlton Tower, Knightsbridge, London

This is education spelt out...

Don't miss the Tatler Schools Live! event on 2nd October.
We'll answer all your questions and help you choose the right school for your child.

TO BOOK TICKETS AND FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT TATLERSCHOOLSGUIDELIVE.EVENTBRITE.CO.UK



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Open Morning 26th September

"Pupils achieve excellent standards in their work and activities", *ISI, Jan 2014*



KING'S COLLEGE SCHOOL
WIMBLEDON
Sunday Times Independent Secondary School of the Year



New lower school opens in 2016
– now recruiting for 11+ entry

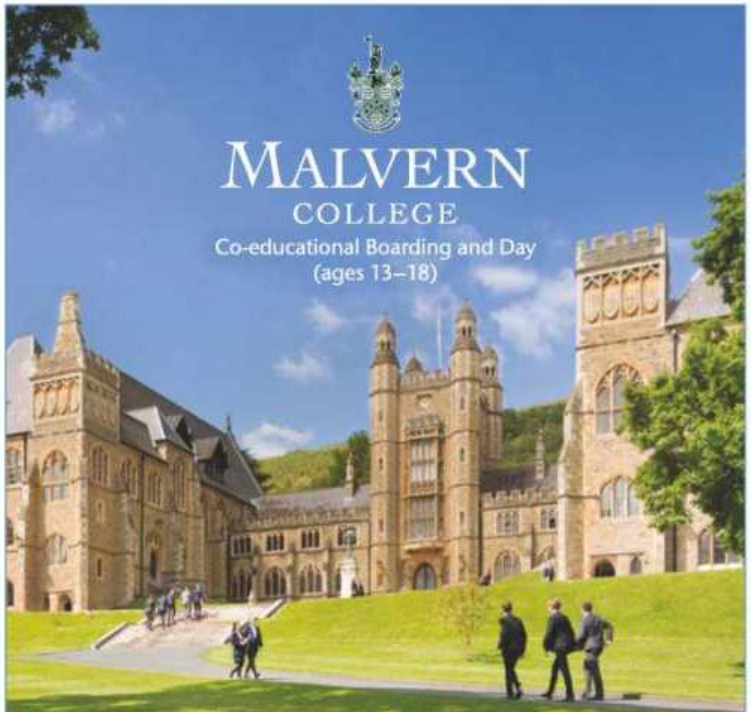
Whole school open morning
Saturday, 19th September · 9am – 12.30pm

Senior school (boys 11–18 girls 16-18) recruiting at 11+ 13+ & 16+
Junior school (boys 7–13) recruiting at 7+ 8+ 9+ & 10+

For information on our year specific open events
visit **kcs.org.uk**

020 8255 5300 · admissions@kcs.org.uk

MALVERN
COLLEGE
Co-educational Boarding and Day
(ages 13–18)



Open Morning
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01684 581 515 registrar@malverncollege.org.uk
www.malverncollege.org.uk

IBSTOCK PLACE SCHOOL



Wednesday 16 September
5.00-7.00pm
SENIOR SCHOOL
OPEN EVENING

Saturday 19 September
9.00am-12.30pm
SENIOR SCHOOL
OPEN MORNING

Thursday 24 September
6.00-8.00pm
SIXTH FORM
OPEN EVENING

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Forest School

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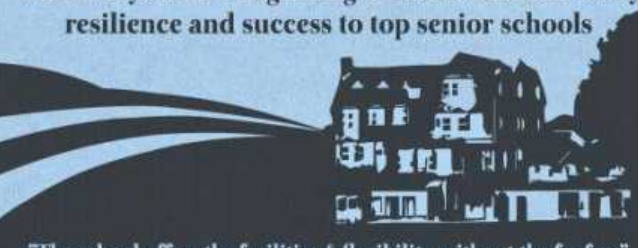
www.*forest*.org.uk
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HH

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Open Mornings

**26 September 2015,
7 May and 11 June 2016**

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Catholic boarding and day school
All girls, ages 11-18
700 acres in Surrey
35 minutes from Central London
100% 'excellent' in every category
ISI Inspection Report 2012



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TATLER'S EDUCATION GUIDE

UK's Top boarding schools - which one came 2nd and 4th?

Ranking Boarding co-educational	Ranking all types Boarding	UK's Top 12 Boarding Schools Based on Sunday Times % A*/A A-Levels	% A*/A A-Levels
	1	Wycombe Abbey School	91%
	2	Winchester College	89%
	3	St Paul's School, London	86%
	4	Eton College	85%
	5	Westminster School	85%
1	6	Sevenoaks School	82%
2	7	Queen Ethelburga's College	82%
3	8	Concord College	81%
4	9	Faculty Queen Ethelburga's	78%
5	10	Brighton College	76%
	11	Tonbridge School	76%
	12	Cheltenham Ladies' College	76%







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These Universities are ranked highly in the "World Rankings".

In 2014 the majority of Queen Ethelburga's College and Faculty students went on to Russell and former 1994 Group Universities.

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Queen Ethelburga's Collegiate

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There are over 150 different co-educational boarding schools in the UK. QE College is ranked second and the Faculty of QE fourth - for top Academic Results. College and Faculty students achieved the equivalent of 4A Grades at A-Level. We accept boys and girls 6 years to 18 years. Over 98% of students go on to first class Universities. Easy to reach by road, rail and air.

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The best boarding accommodation - no-one else even comes close.

Every bedroom is provided with a direct dial phone and voice mail, internet, timer controlled large plasma TV / DVD complete with Sony PlayStation, mini-kitchen with fridge and microwave, a hair dryer, iron and board, wash hand basin, heated towel rail, fan, wi-fi, trouser press and safe. Sixth Form bedrooms also have a bigger 55 inch plasma smart TV, a printer / scanner / copier, a washing machine and dryer, Tassimo coffee machine and a 3 seat leather sofa.
All bedrooms are air-conditioned and have their own individual private en-suite bathroom with toilet and shower. In a recent inspection our pastoral care was rated as "excellent".

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Saturday November 7th (Senior: ages 13–18)
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www.stonyhurst.ac.uk

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"A First-Rate Education"
ISI Report 2014



"Full Marks for Pastoral Care"
Good Schools Guide



"Staggeringly Beautiful Grounds"
Tatler Schools Guide

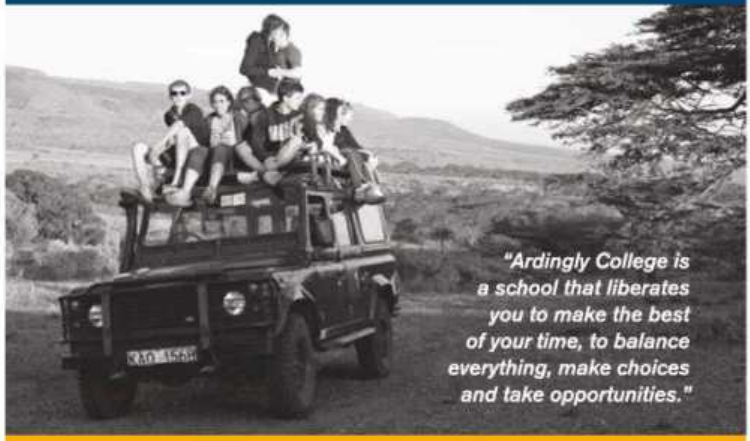
Brookham Open Day
Friday 18th September 9.30am–11.30am
Stay & Play!
Highfield Open Day
Saturday 19th September 9.30am–12 noon



For more Open Day information call
Mrs Caroline Lukic Tel: 01428 728000
www.highfieldschool.org.uk | Liphook, Hampshire GU30 7LQ

OPEN DAYS 2015

Sixth Form Open Morning
Saturday 26 September, 9.15am
Senior School & Sixth Form Open Morning
Saturday 10 October 9.15am



ARDINGLY College

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TATLER'S EDUCATION GUIDE

HANDCROSS PARK
A BRIGHTON COLLEGE SCHOOL



Open Mornings
Saturday 3rd October and Tuesday 24th November

- Girls and boys, ages 2 -13
- Day, weekly boarding (Monday - Friday) or full boarding
- Top rating across all areas in ISI inspection
- Located just off the M23, close to Gatwick

"Handcross Park is now hitting the premier league"
Tatler Schools Guide 2015

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Handcross, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 6HF

ALDRO
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"Bringing out the best in boys"



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Join us for our
Open Morning
Saturday 3 October
at 10.45am

Contact our Admissions Officer
for more details
admissions@lancing.org.uk



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Senior School & Sixth Form

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Tel 01273 465805 | West Sussex BN15 0RW
Registered Charity Number 1076483

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girls and boys 2½ – 13

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25 September, 3 October, 4 March, 5 March.

www.cranmoreprep.co.uk/ West Horsley, Surrey





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Bilton Grange

www.biltongrange.co.uk









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Open Day

Saturday 3rd October 2015

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Saturday 10th October

9.45am - 1.00pm

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Good Schools Guide

office@hanford.dorset.sch.uk

Child Okeford, Blandford, Dorset DT11 8HN

01258 860 219

www.hanfordschool.co.uk



OPEN DAYS

Sixth Form Open Evening
Friday 18th September

Whole School Open Evening
Thursday 8th October

Whole School Open Morning
Saturday 10th October

BADMINTON SCHOOL

e: admissions@badmintonschool.co.uk | t: 0117 905 5271 | badmintonschool.co.uk

TATLER'S EDUCATION GUIDE

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Thursday 26 November 9:30 - until noon

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OPEN MORNING
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Kensington, London

For boys aged 3 to 8 years old

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Fax: 020 7727 9988

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Website: www.hawkesdown.co.uk



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WHITGIFT



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OPEN EVENING | TUESDAY 29 SEPTEMBER 2015
SIXTH FORM AND BOARDING | BY APPOINTMENT

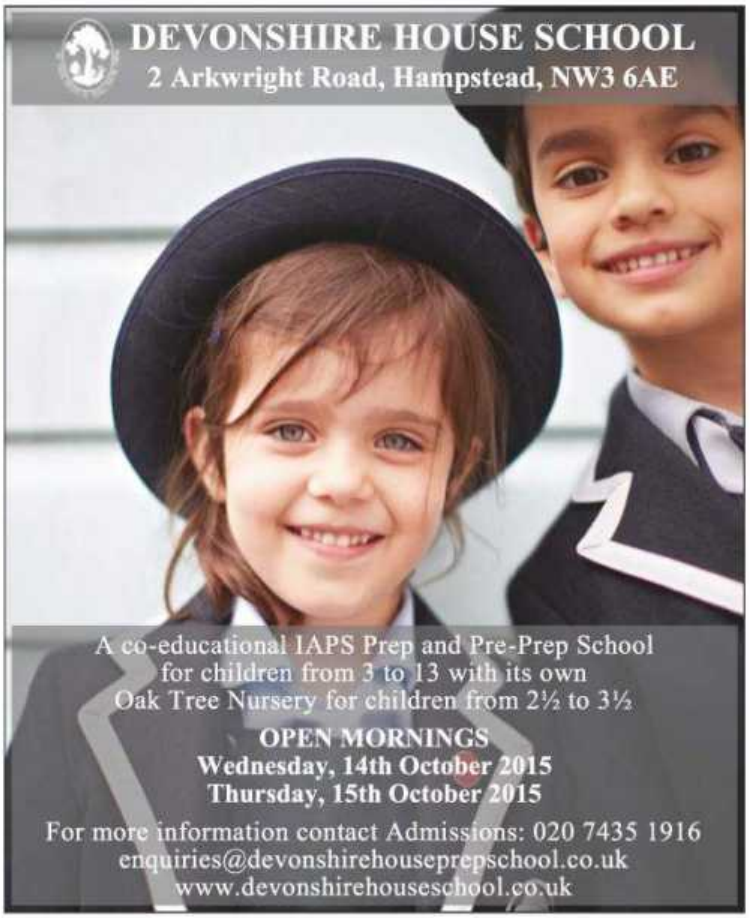
Further information on visiting Whitgift can be found at www.whitgift.co.uk/opendays

admissions@whitgift.co.uk
+44 (0)20 8633 9935

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for children from 3 to 13 with its own
Oak Tree Nursery for children from 2½ to 3½

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Thursday, 15th October 2015

For more information contact Admissions: 020 7435 1916
enquiries@devonshirehouseprepschool.co.uk
www.devonshirehouseschool.co.uk

To advertise contact 020 7499 9080 ext 3705

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01677 450 240
enquiries@aysgarthschool.co.uk
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@ 10.00am

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Telephone: 01295 756259

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T: 020 7931 9469 E: admissions@eatonsquareschool.com

www.eatonsquareschool.com

To advertise contact 020 7499 9080 ext 3705

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01293 520648 www.cottesmoreschool.com



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3 - 13 Day & Boarding

OPEN MORNING 3rd October
www.eaglehouseschool.com
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Saturday 26 September 2015 10.00am - 12.00pm

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Perrott Hill

Time and space for a full education



Perrott Hill's recent Independent Schools Inspectorate Report is outstanding, with the top mark of 'Excellent' awarded in every category.

We encourage you to read the Tatler Schools Guide 2015 and the Good Schools Guide which capture the values and ethos of this flourishing co-educational boarding school.

Perrott Hill, North Perrott, Crewkerne, Somerset, TA18 7SL 01460 72051
www.perrotthill.com headmaster@perrotthill.com

Godstowe



Open Mornings:
Saturdays, 10th October 2015 and 27th February 2016, 10am – 1pm

Please contact the Registrar, Mrs Cathy Gainer, if you would like to attend or to make an appointment at any other time

NURSERY 3-4 PRE-PREP 4-7 PREP 7-13 BOARDING 7-13 GIRLS 3-13 BOYS 3-7

Godstowe Preparatory School
Shrubbery Road
High Wycombe
Buckinghamshire, HP13 6PR

t: 01494 529273
e: registrar@godstowe.org
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Tatler Schools Guide

- Innovative curriculum for boys and girls aged 2½ ~ 13
- Impressive scholarship record for senior school entry
- Early application is recommended for 2016

Visitors always welcome - Tel: 01963 442606 Somerset BA22 7JA

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Prep, Pre-Prep and Nursery for children aged 2½ to 13 years

Scholarship Success
48 awards to Senior Schools in the last two years



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17th October

Lewes Road, East Grinstead, Sussex, RH19 3PD | 01342 321004
registrar@brambletye.com | www.brambletye.co.uk

To advertise contact 020 7499 9080 ext 3705



Sutton Valence School

A co-educational independent day and boarding school
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www.svs.org.uk Preparatory School T: 01622 842117 Senior School T: 01622 845206

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Thinking about a prep school? These are happy non-selective IAPS schools for children aged 3-11, each with a long track record of academic excellence. There are frequent parental tours: come and see why each of these schools is a jewel.

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60 Bassett Road
London W10 6JP
Tel: 020 8969 0313
info@bassetths.org.uk
www.bassetths.org.uk
Open Morning
Saturday 10 October 2015
10.00am-12.30pm

Prospect House School
75 Putney Hill
London SW15 3NT
Tel: 020 8780 0456
info@prospecths.org.uk
www.prospecths.org.uk
Open Morning
Saturday 10 October 2015
9.30am-12.00 noon

Orchard House School
16 Newton Grove
London W4 1LB
Tel: 020 8742 8544
info@orchardhs.org.uk
www.orchardhs.org.uk
Open Morning
Saturday 3 October 2015
9.30am-12.00 noon

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17 September, 15 October

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22 September

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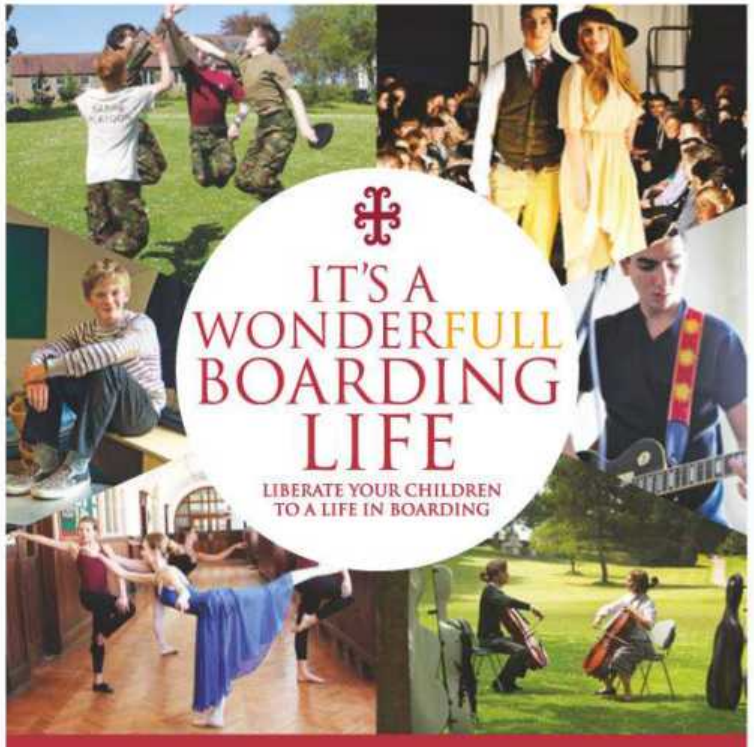
in pursuit of excellence

OPEN DAYS

Saturday 10th October 2015 9.45am - 12.00 noon
Tuesday 20th October 2015 Sixth Form - 5.00pm
Saturday 16th January 2016 9.45am - 12.00 noon
Closing date for applications Monday 18th January 2016

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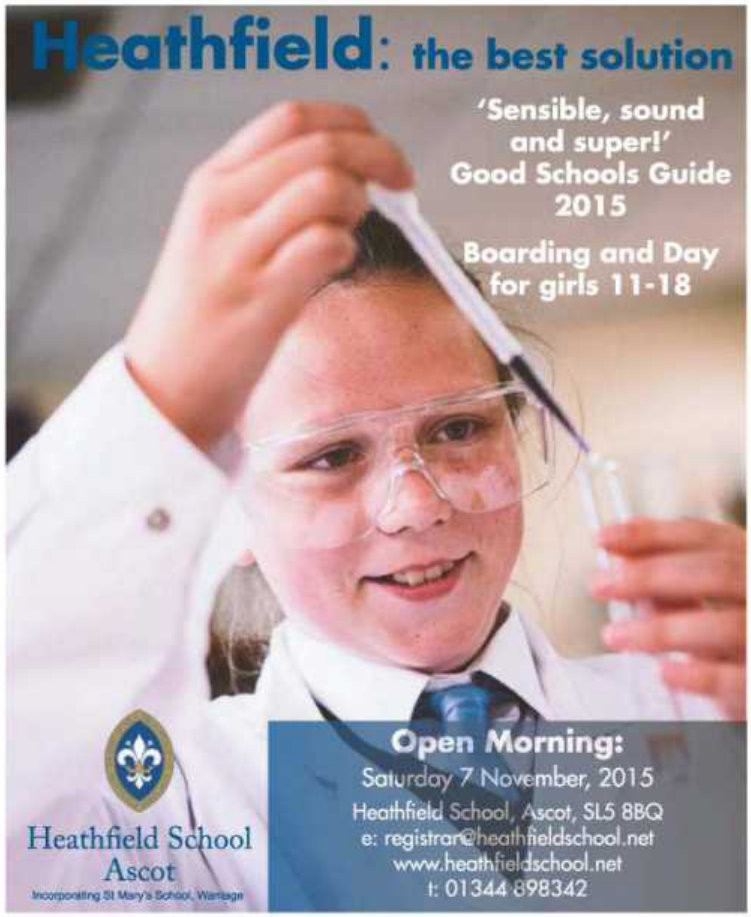
To register for the next
Open Morning
on **5th October 2015**, please email
office@parkside-school.co.uk

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e: registrar@heathfieldschool.net
www.heathfieldschool.net
t: 01344 898342



Open Events
19 Sept (Senior & Sixth Form) 10am-1pm
26 Sept (Pre-Prep & Prep) 10am-1pm
See our website for Oct and Nov dates

020 8557 7004 admissions@syd.gdst.net
www.sydenhamhighschool.gdst.net
15 & 19 Westwood Hill, London, SE26 6BL

South Hampstead High School

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30 September

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senioradmissions@shhs.gdst.net *shhs.gdst.net*
3 Maresfield Gardens, London NW3 5SS
Tel: 020 7435 2899
gdst Girls' Day School Trust

Open Mornings

SVS
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Senior School
(HMC 11–18 day and boarding)
Saturday 26th September 2015
T: 01622 845206 | E: websterk@svs.org.uk

Preparatory School
(Nursery to age 11)
Friday 2nd October 2015
T: 01622 842117 | E: leckiea@svs.org.uk

Sixth Form
Saturday 3rd October 2015
T: 01622 845206 | E: websterk@svs.org.uk

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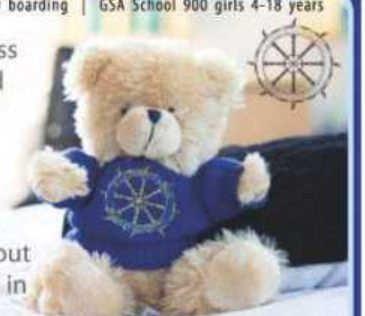
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To advertise contact 020 7499 9080 ext 3705

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Sixth Form Open Evening: 23 September, 5.30-7pm

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www.queenswood.org
admissions@queenswood.org
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Good Schools Guide, October 2014

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Open Days: 28 Nov 2015, 23 Jan, 19 Mar 2016

Please contact registrar@downehouse.net to book an appointment.

t 01635 200286 www.downehouse.net
Cold Ash, Thatcham, Berkshire, RG18 9JJ

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admissions@hamptonschool.org.uk
Tel 020 8979 9273

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ST GEORGE'S ASCOT

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at 10.00am



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*Source – The Spectator Magazine, March 2015



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Saturday 10 October to Friday 16 October

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Putney High School
35 Putney Hill
London SW15 6BH

T: 020 8788 4886
www.putneyhigh.gdst.net

gdst Girls' Day School Trust

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PUBLIC SCHOOLS

26 Abingdon School Park Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 1DE (abingdon.org.uk)
8 Alleyn's School Townley Road, London SE22 8SU (alleyns.org.uk)
64 Ampleforth Ampleforth, York YO62 4ER (college.ampleforth.org.uk)
26 Ardingly College Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH17 6SQ (ardingly.com)
46 Badminton Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol BS9 3BA (badmintonschool.co.uk)
26 Bancroft's School Woodford Green, Essex IG8 0RF (bancrofts.org)
28 Bedales School Church Road, Steep, Petersfield, Hampshire GU32 2DG (bedales.org.uk)
28 Bede's Upper Dicker, East Sussex BN27 3QH, (bedes.org)
28 Bedford School De Parys Avenue, Bedford MK40 2TU (bedfordschool.org.uk)
29 Benenden Cranbrook, Kent TN17 4AA (benenden.kent.sch.uk)
46 Blundell's School Tiverton, Devon EX16 4DN (blundells.org)
29 Bradfield College Bradfield, Reading, Berkshire RG7 6AU (bradfieldcollege.org.uk)
29 Brighton College Eastern Road, Brighton BN2 0AL (brightoncollege.org.uk)
56 Bromsgrove School Worcester Road, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B61 7DU (bromsgrove-school.co.uk)
46 Bryanston Blandford, Dorset DT11 0PX (bryanston.co.uk)
48 Canford Wimborne, Dorset BH21 3AD (canford.com)
30 Caterham School Harestone Valley Road, Caterham, Surrey CR3 6YA (caterhamschool.co.uk)
30 Charterhouse Godalming, Surrey GU7 2DX (charterhouse.org.uk)
48 Cheltenham College Bath Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL53 7LD (cheltenhamcollege.org)
48 The Cheltenham Ladies' College Bayshill Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL50 3EP (cheltladiescollege.org)
30 Christ's Hospital Horsham, West Sussex RH13 0YP (christs-hospital.org.uk)
8 City of London School Queen Victoria Street, London EC4V 3AL (clsb.org.uk)
10 City of London School for Girls St Giles' Terrace, London EC2Y 8BB (clsg.org.uk)
49 Clayesmore Iwerne Minster, Blandford, Dorset DT11 8LL (clayesmore.com)
49 Clifton College Guthrie Road, Clifton, Bristol BS8 3EZ (cliftoncollege.com)
49 Dauntsey's School West Lavington, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 4HE (dauntseys.org)
50 Dean Close School Shelburne Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL51 6HE (deanclose.org.uk)
31 Downe House Cold Ash, Thatcham, Berkshire RG18 9JJ (downehouse.net)
50 Downside School Stratton-on-the-Fosse, Radstock, Bath BA3 4RJ (downside.co.uk)
10 Dulwich College Dulwich Common, London SE21 7LD (dulwich.org.uk)
31 Eastbourne College Old Wish Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN21 4JX (eastbourne-college.co.uk)
56 Ellesmere College Ellesmere, Shropshire SY12 9AB (ellesmere.com)
10 Emanuel School Battersea Rise, London SW11 1HS (emanuel.org.uk)
31 Eton College Windsor, Berkshire SL4 6DW (etoncollege.com)
64 Fettes Carrington Road, Edinburgh EH4 1QX (fettes.com)
11 Francis Holland School NW1 Clarence Gate, London NW1 6XR (fhs-nw1.org.uk)
11 Francis Holland School SW1 39 Graham Terrace, London SW1W 8JF (fhs-sw1.org.uk)
64 Giggleswick Settle, North Yorkshire BD24 0DE (giggleswick.org.uk)
65 Glenalmond College Glenalmond, Perth PH1 3RY (glenalmondcollege.co.uk)
50 Godolphin Milford Hill, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP1 2RA (godolphin.org)
11 The Godolphin & Latymer School Iffley Road, London W6 0PG (godolphinandlatymer.com)
65 Gordonstoun Elgin, Moray IV30 5RF (gordonstoun.org.uk)
32 Haberdashers' Aske's Boys' School Butterfly Lane, Elstree, Hertfordshire WD6 3AF (habsboys.org.uk)
32 Haileybury Hertford, Hertfordshire SG13 7NU (haileybury.com)
12 The Harrodian Lonsdale Road, London SW13 9QN (harrodian.com)
12 Harrow School 5 High Street, Harrow-on-the-Hill, Middlesex HA1 3HP (harrowschool.org.uk)
32 Headington School Headington Road, Oxford OX3 7TD (headington.org)
32 Heathfield School London Road, Ascot, Berkshire SL5 8BQ (heathfieldschool.net)
12 Highgate School North Road, London N6 4AY (highgateschool.org.uk)
33 Hurtwood House Holmbury St Mary, Dorking, Surrey RH5 6NU (hurtwoodhouse.com)
13 Ibstock Place School Clarence Lane, Roehampton SW15 5PY (ibstockplaceschool.co.uk)
13 James Allen's Girls' School East Dulwich Grove, London SE22 8TE (jags.org.uk)
65 Kilgraston Bridge of Earn, Perth PH2 9BQ (kilgraston.com)
58 King Edward VI High School for Girls Edgbaston Park Road, Birmingham B15 2UB (kehs.org.uk)
56 King Edward's School Edgbaston Park Road, Birmingham B15 2UA (kes.org.uk)
14 King's College School Southside, London SW19 4TT (kcs.org.uk)
33 The King's School Canterbury, Kent CT1 2ES (kings-school.co.uk)
66 The King's School, Chester Wrexham Road, Chester CH4 7QL (kingschester.co.uk)
14 The Lady Eleanor Holles School Hanworth Road, Hampton, Middlesex TW12 3HF (lehs.org.uk)
66 Lathallan School Johnshaven, Angus DD10 0HN (lathallan.org.uk)
14 Latymer Upper School King Street, London W6 9LR (latymer-upper.org)
58 The Leys Trumpington Road, Cambridge CB2 7AD (theleys.net)
67 Loretto Linkfield Road, Musselburgh, East Lothian EH21 7RE (loretto.com)
33 Magdalen College School Cowley Place, Oxford OX4 1DZ (mcsoxford.org)
58 Malvern College College Road, Malvern, Worcestershire WR14 3DF (malverncollege.org.uk)
50 Marlborough College Bath Road, Marlborough, Wiltshire SN8 1PA (marlboroughcollege.org)
16 Merchant Taylors' School Sandy Lodge, Northwood, Middlesex HA6 2HT (mtsn.org.uk)
67 Merchiston Castle School Colinton Road, Edinburgh EH13 0PU (merchiston.co.uk)
51 Millfield Street, Somerset BA16 0YD (millfieldschool.com)
51 Monkton Combe Church Lane, Monkton Combe, Bath BA2 7HG (monktoncombeschool.com)
52 Monmouth School Almshouse Street, Monmouth NP25 3XP (monmouthschool.org)
16 More House 22–24 Pont Street, London SW1X 0AA (morehouse.org.uk)
59 Moreton Hall Weston Rhyn, Oswestry, Shropshire SY11 3EW (moretonhallschool.com)
34 New Hall School The Avenue, Boreham, Chelmsford CM3 3HS (newhallschool.co.uk)
16 North London Collegiate Canons Drive, Edgware, Middlesex HA8 7RJ (nlcs.org.uk)
59 Norwich School The Close, Norwich NR1 4DD (norwich-school.org.uk)
59 Oakham School Chapel Close, Market Place, Oakham, Rutland LE15 6DT (oakham.rutland.sch.uk)
34 The Oratory School Woodcote, Reading RG8 0PJ (oratory.co.uk)
60 Oundle Oundle, Peterborough PE8 4GH (oundleschool.org.uk)
34 Oxford High School Belbroughton Road, Oxford OX2 6XA (oxfordhigh.gdst.net)
60 The Perse School Hills Road, Cambridge CB2 8QF (perse.co.uk)
35 Prior's Field Priorsfield Road, Godalming, Surrey GU7 2RH (priorsfieldschool.com)
16 Putney High School 35 Putney Hill, London SW15 6BH (putneyhigh.gdst.net)
35 Queen Anne's School Henley Road, Caversham, Berkshire RG4 6DX (qas.org.uk)
67 Queen Margaret's Escrick Park, York YO19 6EU (queenmargarets.com)
18 Queen's College 43–49 Harley Street, London W1G 8BT (qcl.org.uk)
18 Queen's Gate 113 Queen's Gate, London SW7 5LE (queensgate.org.uk)
35 Radley College Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 2HR (radley.org.uk)
68 Robert Gordon's College Schoolhill, Aberdeen AB10 1FE (rgc.aberdeen.sch.uk)
36 Roedean School Roedean Way, Brighton BN2 5RQ (roedean.co.uk)
60 Rugby School Rugby, Warwickshire, CV22 5EH (rugbyschool.net)
36 St Catherine's Bramley Station Road, Bramley, Guildford, Surrey GU5 0DF (stcatherines.info)
36 St Edward's Oxford Woodstock Road, Oxford OX2 7NN (stedwardsoxford.org)
37 St George's Ascot Wells Lane, Ascot, Berkshire SL5 7DZ (stgeorges-ascot.org.uk)
68 St George's School for Girls Garscube Terrace, Edinburgh EH12 6BG (st-georges.edin.sch.uk)
37 St Helen & St Katharine Faringdon Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 1BE (shsk.org.uk)
68 St Leonards School St Andrews, Fife KY16 9QJ (stleonards-fife.org)
37 St Mary's Ascot St Mary's Road, Ascot, Berkshire SL5 9JF (st-marys-ascot.co.uk)
52 St Mary's Calne Calne, Wiltshire SN11 0DF (stmaryscalne.org)
52 St Mary's Shaftesbury Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 9LP (st-marys-shaftesbury.co.uk)
18 St Paul's Girls' School Brook Green, London W6 7BS (spgs.org)
20 St Paul's School Lonsdale Road, London SW13 9JT (stpaulsschool.org.uk)
69 St Peter's School Clifton, York YO30 6AB (stpetersyork.org.uk)
38 St Swithun's School Alresford Road, Winchester, Hampshire SO21 1HA (stswithuns.com)
69 Sedbergh Sedbergh, Cumbria LA10 5HG (sedberghschool.org)
38 Sevenoaks School High Street, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1HU (sevenoaksschool.org)
52 Sherborne Girls Bradford Road, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 3QN (sherborne.com)
54 Sherborne School Abbey Road, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 3AP (sherborne.org)
61 Shrewsbury School The Schools, Shrewsbury SY3 7BA (shrewsbury.org.uk)
20 South Hampstead High School 3 Maresfield Gardens, London NW3 5SS (shhs.gdst.net)
61 Stephen Perse Foundation Union Road, Cambridge CB2 1HF (stephenperse.com)
54 Stonar Cottles Park, Atworth, Wiltshire SN12 8NT (stonarschool.com)
38 Stowe School Stowe, Buckingham MK18 5EH (stowe.co.uk)
70 Strathallan Forgandenny, Perthshire PH2 9EG (strathallan.co.uk)
40 Tonbridge School Tonbridge, Kent TN9 1JP (tonbridge-school.co.uk)
40 Tudor Hall Wykham Park, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX16 9UR (tudorhallschool.com)
20 University College School Frognal, Hampstead, London NW3 6XH (ucs.org.uk)
61 Uppingham Uppingham, Rutland LE15 9QE (uppingham.co.uk)
40 Wellington Crowthorne, Berkshire RG45 7PU (wellingtoncollege.org.uk)
22 Westminster School 17 Dean's Yard, London SW1P 3PB (westminster.org.uk)
54 Westonbirt Tetbury, Gloucestershire GL8 8QG (westonbirt.org)
40 Whitgift Haling Park, South Croydon CR2 6YT (whitgift.co.uk)
22 Wimbledon High School Mansell Road, London SW19 4AB (wimbledonhigh.gdst.net)
42 Winchester College College Street, Winchester, Hampshire SO23 9NA (winchestercollege.org)
70 Withington Girls' School Wellington Road, Fallowfield, Manchester M14 6BL (wgs.org)
42 Woldingham School Marden Park, Woldingham, Surrey CR3 7YA (woldinghamschool.co.uk)
42 Wycombe Abbey High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP11 1PE (wycombeabbey.com)



PREP SCHOOLS



104 **Abberley Hall** Worcester WR6 6DD (abberleyhall.co.uk)
90 **Aldro** Lomard Street, Shackleford, Surrey GU8 6AS (aldro.org)
108 **Ardvreck** Crieff, Perthshire PH7 4EX (ardvreckschool.co.uk)
82 **Arnold House** 1 Loundoun Road, London NW8 0LH (arnoldhouse.co.uk)
90 **Ashdown House** Forest Row, East Sussex RH18 5JY (ashdownhouse.co.uk)
108 **Aysgarth School** Bedale, North Yorkshire DL8 1TF (aysgarthschool.com)
104 **Beachborough School** Westbury, Brackley, Northamptonshire NN13 5LB (beachborough.com)
100 **Beaudesert Park School** Minchinhampton, Stroud, Gloucestershire GL6 9AF (beaudesert.gloucs.sch.uk)
104 **Beeston Hall** West Runton, Cromer, Norfolk NR27 9NQ (beestonhall.co.uk)
108 **Belhaven Hill** Dunbar, East Lothian EH42 1NN (belhavenhill.com)
104 **Bilton Grange** Dunchurch, near Rugby, Warwickshire CV22 6QU (biltongrange.co.uk)
90 **Bishopsgate** Bishopsgate Road, Englefield Green, Surrey TW20 0YJ (bishopsgate-school.co.uk)
82 **Broomwood Hall** 68–74 Nightingale Lane, London SW12 8NR (broomwood.co.uk)
90 **Bruern Abbey** Chesterton, Oxfordshire OX26 1UY (bruernabbey.org)
82 **Bute House** Luxemburg Gardens, London W6 7EA (butehouse.co.uk)
90 **Caldicott School** Crown Lane, Farnham Royal, Buckinghamshire SL2 3SL (caldicott.com)
108 **Cargilfield School** Gamekeeper's Road, Edinburgh EH4 6HU (cargilfield.com)
100 **Chafyn Grove** Bourne Avenue, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP1 1LS (chafyngrove.co.uk)
90 **Cheam School** Headley, Newbury, Berkshire RG19 8LD (cheamschool.com)
92 **Christ Church Cathedral School** Oxford OX1 1QW (cccs.org.uk)
82 **Colet Court** Lonsdale Road, London SW13 9JT (coletcourt.org.uk)
92 **Cothill House** Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX13 6JL (cothill.net)
92 **Cottesmore** Buchan Hill, Pease Pottage, West Sussex RH11 9AU (cottesmoreschool.com)
92 **Cranleigh Prep** Horseshoe Lane, Cranleigh, Surrey GU6 8QH (cranprep.org)
92 **Cumnor House** Danehill, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH17 7HT (cumnor.co.uk)
110 **Cundall Manor School** Cundall, North Yorkshire YO61 2RW (cundallmanorschool.com)
92 **Dragon School** Bardwell Road, Oxford OX2 6SS (dragonschool.org)
82 **Dulwich Prep London** 42 Alleyn Park, London SE21 7AA (dulwichpreplondon.org)
83 **Eaton House The Manor** 58 Clapham Common Northside, London SW4 9RU (eatonhouseschools.com)
83 **Eaton Square School** 79 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1PP (eatonsquareschool.com)
83 **L'Ecole de Battersea** Trott Street, London SW11 3DS (lecoledespetits.co.uk)
93 **Edge Grove** Aldenham Village, Hertfordshire WD25 8NL (edgegrove.com)
104 **The Elms** Colwall, Malvern, Worcestershire WR13 6EF (elmsschool.co.uk)
93 **Elstree** Woolhampton, Reading, Berkshire RG7 5TD (elstreeschool.org.uk)
83 **Falkner House** 19 Brechin Place, London SW7 4QB (falknerhouse.co.uk)
93 **Farleigh School** Red Rice, Andover, Hampshire SP11 7PW (farleighschool.com)
93 **Feltonfleet School** Byfleet Road, Cobham, Surrey KT11 1DR (feltonfleet.co.uk)
105 **Foremarke Hall** Milton, Derbyshire DE65 6EJ (foremarke.org.uk)
83 **Garden House School** Turks Row, London SW3 4TW (gardenhouseschool.co.uk)
84 **Glendower Prep School** 86–87 Queen's Gate, London SW7 5JX (glendowerprep.org)
93 **Godstowe School** High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP13 6PR (godstowe.org)
94 **Hall Grove** Bagshot, Surrey GU19 5HZ (hallgrove.co.uk)
84 **The Hall School** 23 Crossfield Road, London NW3 4NU (hallschool.co.uk)
94 **Handcross Park School** Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH17 6HF (handcrossparkschool.co.uk)
100 **Hanford** Child Okeford, Blandford, Dorset DT11 8HN (hanford.dorset.sch.uk)
100 **Hatherop Castle** Hatherop, Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 3NB (hatheropcastle.co.uk)
100 **Hazlegrove** Sparkford, Somerset BA22 7JA (hazlegrove.co.uk)
94 **Highfield** Highfield Lane, Liphook, Hampshire GU30 7LQ (highfieldschool.org.uk)
84 **Hill House** 17 Hans Place, London SW1X 0EP (hillhouseschool.co.uk)
94 **Holmewood House** Langton Green, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 0EB (holmewoodhouse.co.uk)
84 **Hornsby House** Hearnville Road, London SW12 8RS (hornsbyhouse.org.uk)
94 **Horris Hill** Newton, Newbury, Berkshire RG20 9DJ (horrishill.com)
84 **Kensington Prep School** 596 Fulham Road, London SW6 5PA (kensingtonprep.gdst.net)
105 **King's College School** West Road, Cambridge CB3 9DN (kcs.cambs.sch.uk)
101 **King's Hall** Kingston Road, Taunton, Somerset TA2 8AA (kingshalltaunton.co.uk)
101 **Knighton House** Durweston, Blandford, Dorset DT11 0PY (knightonhouse.dorset.sch.uk)
85 **Knightsbridge School** 67 Pont Street, London SW1X 0BD (knightsbridgeschool.com)
95 **Lambrook** Winkfield Row, Bracknell, Berkshire RG42 6LU (lambrook.berks.sch.uk)
101 **Leaden Hall** 70 The Close, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP1 2EP (leaden-hall.com)
95 **Lockers Park** Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire HP1 1TL (lockerspark.herts.sch.uk)
95 **Ludgrove** Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 3AB (ludgrove.net)
105 **Maidwell Hall** Maidwell, Northamptonshire NN6 9JG (maidwellhall.co.uk)
95 **Milbourne Lodge** 43 Arbrook Lane, Esher, Surrey KT10 9EG (milbournelodge.co.uk)
105 **Moor Park** Richard's Castle, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 4DZ (moorpark.org.uk)
95 **Moulsford** Moulsford-on-Thames, Oxfordshire OX10 9HR (moulsford.com)
110 **Mowden Hall School** Newton, Stocksfield, Northumberland NE43 7TP (mowdenhall.co.uk)
96 **New College School** Savile Road, Oxford OX1 3UA (newcollegeschool.org)
85 **Newton Prep School** 149 Battersea Park Road, London SW8 4BX (newtonprepschool.co.uk)
85 **Norland Place School** 162–166 Holland Park Avenue, London W11 4UH (norlandplace.com)
85 **Northcote Lodge** 26 Bolingbroke Grove, London SW11 6EL (northcotelodge.co.uk)
85 **Notting Hill Prep School** 95 Lancaster Road, London W11 1QQ (nottinghillprep.com)
106 **Old Buckenham Hall** Brettenham Park, Ipswich, Suffolk IP7 7PH (obh.co.uk)
85 **Orchard House School** 16 Newton Grove, London W4 1LB (orchardhs.org.uk)
106 **Orwell Park** Nacton, Suffolk IP10 0ER (orwellpark.co.uk)
106 **Packwood Haugh** Ruyton XI Towns, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY4 1HX (packwood-haugh.co.uk)
96 **Papplewick** Windsor Road, Ascot, Berkshire SL5 7LH (papplewick.org.uk)
86 **Pembridge Hall** 18 Pembridge Square, London W2 4EH (pembridgehall.co.uk)
101 **Perrott Hill** North Perrott, Crewkerne, Somerset TA18 7SL (perrotthill.com)
96 **The Pilgrims' School** The Close, Winchester SO23 9LT (thepilgrims-school.co.uk)
102 **Pinewood School** Bourton, near Shrivenham, Wiltshire SN6 8HZ (pinewoodschool.co.uk)
102 **Port Regis** Motcombe Park, Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 9QA (portregis.com)
86 **Prospect House School** 75 Putney Hill, London SW15 3NT (prospects.org.uk)
110 **Queen Mary's School** Baldersby Park, Topcliffe, North Yorkshire YO7 3BZ (queenmarys.org)
86 **Ravenscourt Park Prep School** 16 Ravenscourt Avenue, London W6 0SL (rpps.co.uk)
86 **Redcliffe School** 47 Redcliffe Gardens, London SW10 9JH (redcliffeschool.com)
107 **S. Anselm's School** Bakewell, Derbyshire DE45 1DP (sanselms.co.uk)
87 **Saint Christina's School** 25 St Edmund's Terrace, London NW8 7PY (saintchristinas.org.uk)
96 **Saint Ronan's School** Water Lane, Hawkhurst, Kent TN18 5DJ (saintronans.co.uk)
96 **St Andrew's, Pangborne** Buckhold, Pangbourne, West Berkshire RG8 8QA (standrewspangbourne.co.uk)
87 **St Christopher's School** 32 Belsize Lane, London NW3 5AE (st-christophers.hampstead.sch.uk)
96 **St Hugh's** Carswell Manor, Faringdon, Oxfordshire SN7 8PT (st-hughs.co.uk)
97 **St John's Beaumont** Priest Hill, Old Windsor, Berkshire SL4 2JN (stjohnsbeaumont.org.uk)
107 **St John's College School** Grange Road, Cambridge CB3 9AA (sjcs.co.uk)
110 **St Martin's Ampleforth** Gilling Castle, Gilling East, York YO62 4HP (stmartins.ampleforth.org.uk)
112 **St Mary's Melrose** Abbey Park, Melrose TD6 9LN (stmarysmelrose.org.uk)
107 **St Richard's School** Bredenbury Court, Bromyard, Herefordshire HR7 4TD (st-richards.org.uk)
102 **Sandroyd** Rushmore Park, Tollard Royal, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP5 5QD (sandroyd.org)
102 **Sherborne Prep** Acreman Street, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 3NY (sherborneprep.org)
97 **Shrewsbury House** 107 Ditton Road, Surbiton, Surrey KT6 6RL (shrewsburyhouse.net)
97 **Summer Fields** Mayfield Road, Oxford OX2 7EN (summerfields.com)
97 **Sunningdale School** Sunningdale, Berkshire SL5 9PY (sunningdaleschool.co.uk)
87 **Sussex House School** 68 Cadogan Square, London SW1X 0EA (sussexhouseschool.co.uk)
112 **Terrington Hall** Terrington, York, North Yorkshire YO60 6PR (terringtonhall.com)
87 **Thomas's Battersea** 28–40 Battersea High Street, London SW11 3JB (thomas-s.co.uk)
87 **Thomas's Clapham** Broomwood Road, London SW11 6JZ (thomas-s.co.uk)
87 **Thomas's Fulham** Hugon Road, London SW6 3ES (thomas-s.co.uk)
87 **Thomas's Kensington** 17–19 Cottesmore Gardens, London W8 5PR (thomas-s.co.uk)
97 **Twyford School** Twyford, Winchester, Hampshire SO21 1NW (twyfordschool.com)
88 **The Village School** 2 Parkhill Road, London NW3 2YN (thevillageschool.org.uk)
97 **Walhampton** Lymington, Hampshire SO41 5ZG (walhampton.com)
98 **Wellesley House** Ramsgate Road, Broadstairs, Kent CT10 2DG (wellesley.kent.sch.uk)
98 **Westbourne House** Shopwyke, Chichester, West Sussex PO20 2BH (westbournehouse.org)
88 **Westminster Cathedral Choir School** Ambrosden Avenue, London SW1P 1QH (choirschool.com)
88 **Westminster Under School** 27 Vincent Square, London SW1P 2NN (westminsterunder.org.uk)
88 **Wetherby Prep School** Bryanston Square, London W1H 2EA (wetherbyprep.co.uk)
107 **Winchester House School** High Street, Brackley, Northamptonshire NN13 7AZ (winchester-house.org)
98 **Windlesham House** Washington, Pulborough, West Sussex RH20 4AY (windlesham.com)
107 **Witham Hall School** Witham on the Hill, Bourne, Lincolnshire PE10 0JJ (withamhall.com)
98 **Woodcote House School** Snows Ride, Windlesham, Surrey GU20 6PF (woodcotehouseschool.co.uk)



Could do better

...in fact, some darling sprogs couldn't do much worse. Our guide to reading between the lines at that all-important parent-teacher evening. By Hugo Rifkind

Obviously, your child is different. Your child is special, gifted; sort of like you, but recreated by you. He or she has no flaws, except for those that obviously come from your other half – the bastard – but you're working on ironing them out. All of this is a given. Really. You're not kidding yourself. It's all true. So, when a teacher says nice things about your child at parents' evening, you can take them all at face value. Oh, yes. Other people, though, are not so fortunate. Their kids are just kids. Chances are, teachers have to gild the lily a little bit. So, here follows a quick translation of the nice things they say, when they mean something a bit nastier. Although it's not for you. It's for everybody else. Obviously.

'Your daughter has lots of friends'

Your daughter has kissed every boy in the class and gone a good deal further with at least five of them. Lord knows what she gets up to with the girls.

'Your son has lots of friends'

Your son is the class bully.

'Timmy is so funny and probably the class joker, but could perhaps learn to restrain his exuberance just a little'

Timmy needs to stop getting his winkle out in maths.

'Tabitha is mature beyond her years'

Tabitha needs to stop dressing like Beyoncé and twerking with the geography teacher.

'Your child is very emotional'

Last week somebody laughed at her dinosaur pencil case and it took three members of staff to get her teeth out of his shoe.

'Toby is very good at keeping himself occupied'

Toby eats his own snot.

'Jack is keen to try new things'

Jack eats other people's snot.

'Matilda is very ambitious'

When Clarissa turned out to be slightly better than Matilda at the trumpet, Matilda threw Clarissa's trumpet into the street where it was run over by a truck.

'Patrick has a keen and self-motivated interest in science'

Patrick found a dead rat in the playground and dissected it with a pair of compasses.

'Emily is a very religious girl'

Emily drew a pentagram around Patrick's rat and spent a whole playtime chanting and trying to raise it from the dead.

'Martin is very grown-up for an 11-year-old'

Martin smokes.

'Poppy's reading isn't great, but it's so obvious she loves books'

Poppy ate *The Tiger Who Came to Tea*. It was like a dog killing a bird. Staples and all.

'Jemima is so beautiful – she should definitely think about modelling'

Jemima is literally the stupidest person I've ever met. More so than your wife, even.

'I've no idea what your child built in DT, but it showed a very impressive grasp of engineering for somebody so young'

It was either a crossbow or an electric chair.

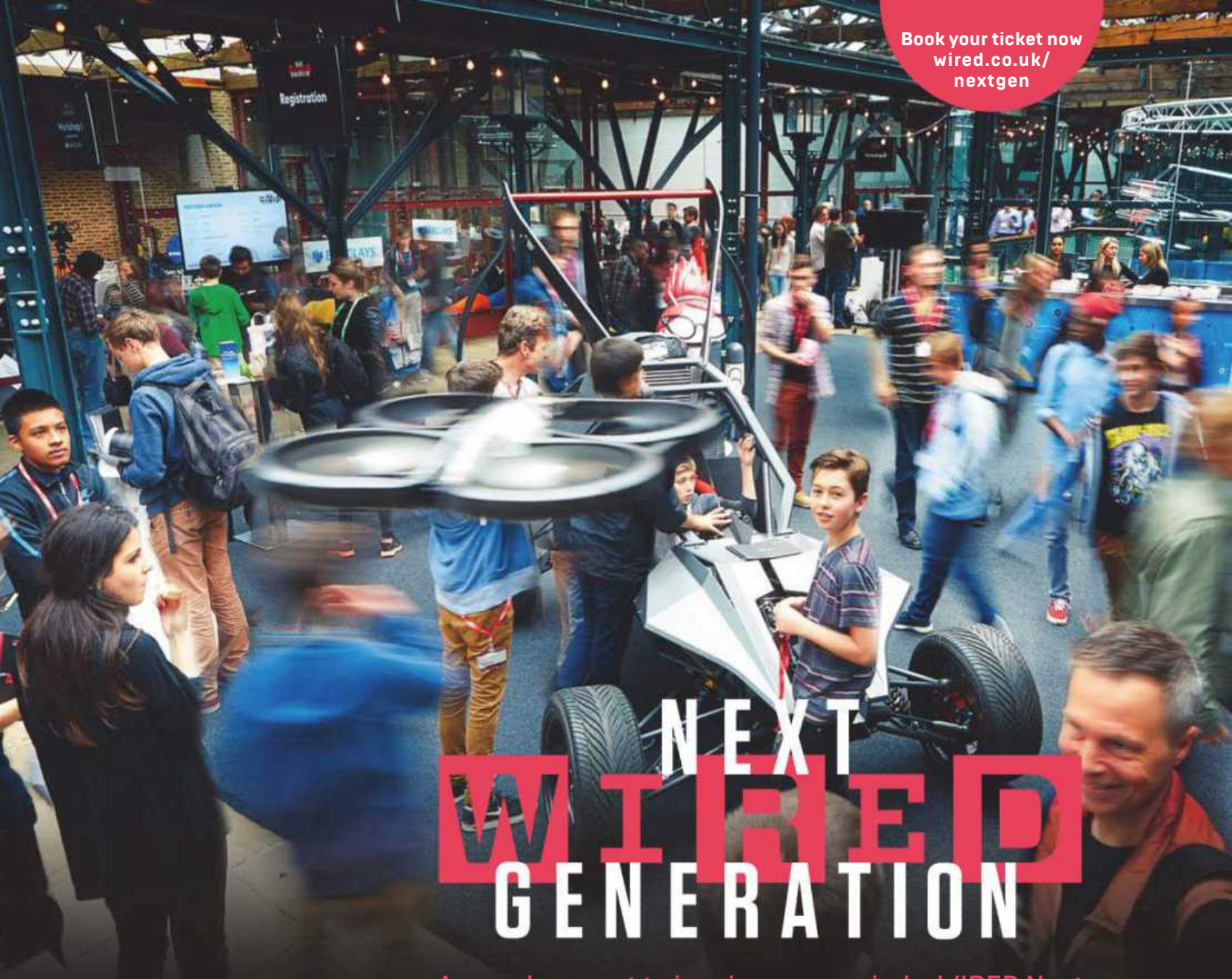
'I know Michelle is only 15, but we all think she'll make a wonderful mother'

In about seven months, we reckon.

'Oxbridge might be a little ambitious, but we're completely confident that Jeremy will end up in a redbrick institution'

Although it won't be a university.

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